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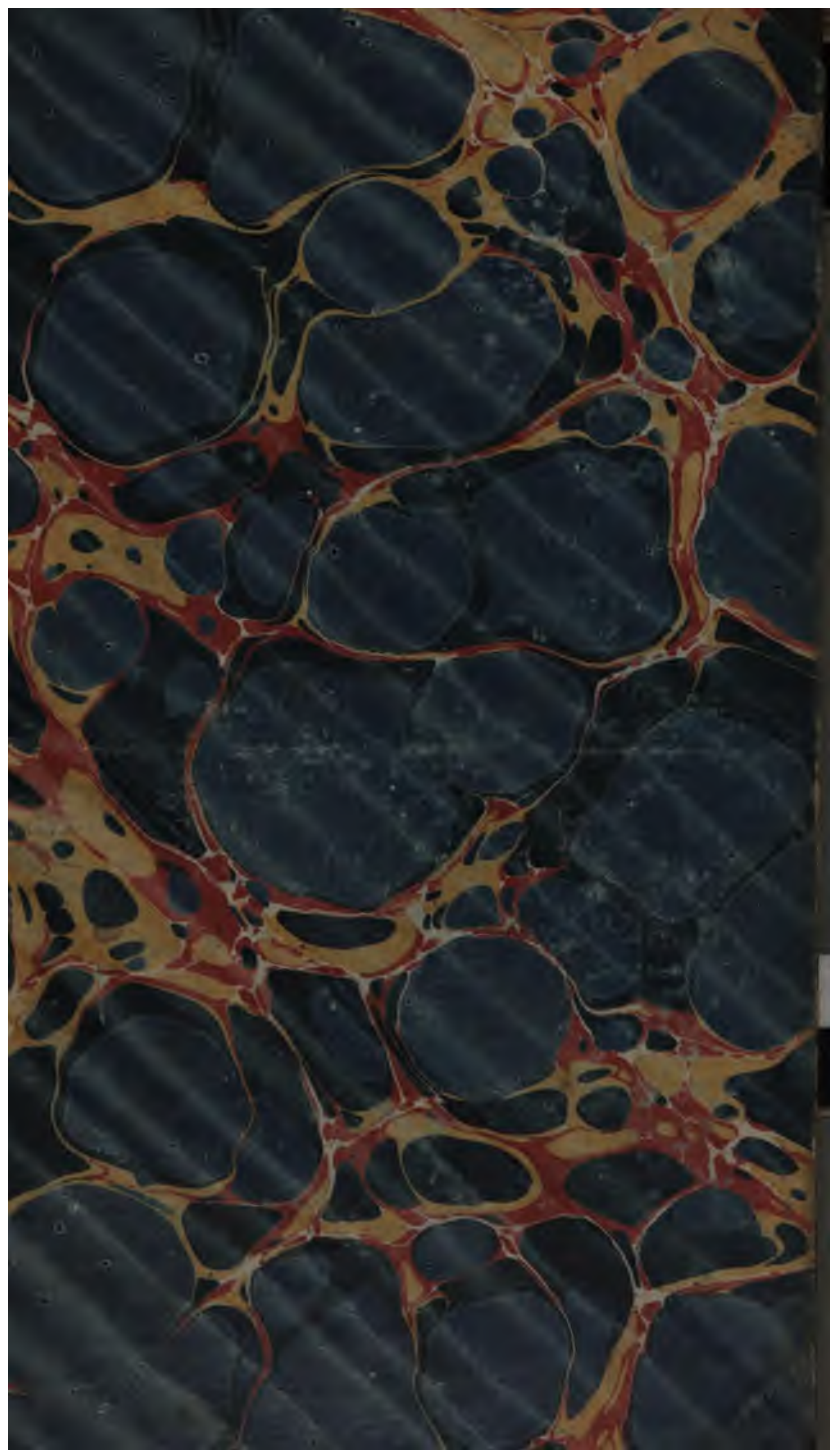
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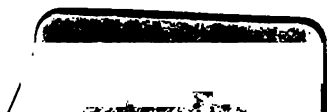
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**MARY.**



# MARY,

A

DAUGHTER OF THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY.

*A Novel*

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"HIGHLAND SPORTS AND PASTIMES," "EKMoor," "BROOKLANDS,"

ETC.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

VOL. I.



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1853.





M A R Y

A DAUGHTER OF

THE ENGLISH PEASANTRY.

CHAPTER I.

Nobility is not only in dignity and ancient lineage, not in great revenues, lands or possessions, but in wisdom knowledge, and virtue—which in man is very nobility—and this nobility bringeth men to dignity. Honour ought to be given to virtue, not riches.

ANACHARSIS.

IN one of the finest agricultural counties among the many of which England has reason to be proud, intersected by a broad river, and

glorying in rich vales and fine forests, in a sheltered and sequestered village, may even now be seen the woodbine-covered cottage of George Radstock—he was a labourer, a simple-minded, honest, hard working agricultural labourer, hired by an opulent neighbouring farmer, who rented several hundred acres of land, at the weekly stipend of ten shillings; for which sum he was liable to be called on, at all times and in all seasons, to perform all sorts of work connected with the farm—whether it might be ploughing, sowing, bush-harrowing, or mowing.

The period at which my story commences, was a few years subsequent to the termination of the late war, when farmers though already commencing a new era in agricultural management, did not declare themselves to be entirely ruined. Radstock was then about fifty-six years of age, yet as athletic in person, as honest in heart, a most efficient labourer, and the best of parents to a family, consisting of

not less than seven children. The eldest, then about eighteen years of age, like his father, worked on the farm, receiving eight shillings a-week, this sum he readily handed over to the general stock, and thus with eighteen shillings a-week, respected by their neighbours, and at all events treated with comparative justice by their master, the family were considered as passing rich and happy. And truly were they so, if honest labour, sufficient food of the plainest, sound sleep, and affectionate intercourse with one another have ought to do with that most precious possession in this world of care.

The second son, George, named after his father, was four years younger than his eldest brother, and to his career in life my pages are frequently directed. The remainder of the family, three daughters and two other boys were all young, and with the exception that they fill up the very general subject of what a rural labourer has to contend with—I shall

scarcely refer to them—they were born to struggle on in a humble career in life, and scarcely cared or endeavoured to rise above it. The cottage in which this large and peaceful family resided was rented for the annual sum of five pounds from the neighbouring squire, to whom the whole village, together with a large estate around it, principally, if not entirely, belonged. And all things considered, it would have been difficult to have selected, throughout the agricultural districts, a more contented and united circle. Political excitement and party feeling had then scarcely reached, with the bitterness of more recent days, or crushed with their destructive effects, the primitive quiet of this rural retreat. Indeed where the lord of all he surveyed for miles and miles around went hand and heart in feelings and opinions with the only other actual resident gentleman the rector, and the rector was beloved by his flock and respected by the farmers, and consequently had not only his

tithes well paid, but many additions in the shape of a fat goose at Michaelmas, or a fine turkey at Christmas, things were not likely to be disturbed. Moreover, the farmers became rich on the good land they held at easy rentals, corn sold at a high price, and they were therefore not likely to desire a will of their own—or if they had one, scarcely cared to express it. Things, therefore, if they did not improve or advance in what the world terms rapid strides to civilization, at all events, jogged on smoothly, and all parties were unanimous in the opinion that it was wise to let well alone. But probably the cause for this precious contentment and peace which apparently reigned throughout this rural village of Lindford, for for such was its name—where poor-rates were not heavy—and parish duties light, was its sequestered position—remote from the passing events in the great world, thus leaving it little affected either by politics, tithe feuds, vagrancy acts, or actual poverty, might be at-

tributed to the fact—notwithstanding its size, for the population was considerable—to the non-residence of a lawyer and the existence of only one public-house ; the landlord of which brewed his own beer, which, if it was not sufficiently strong to do much harm, was at all events, in a measure, free from those stimulating drugs, which, while they destroy the body, excite and enfeeble the mind, and were more expensive to him than a few hops and much water.

But far more than all other causes was the constant presence among them of a wealthy landlord, who, if he was not over generous, was rarely unjust. Moreover, the district being agricultural, called for the labours of all able-bodied men in the parish. In the immediate vicinity of George Radstock's cottage, there resided another family, of whom, as they will hereafter take a prominent part in my tale, I must here speak : it consisted of four individuals, the father, Michael Coddington, like his friend Radstock, a day labourer, working

on the same farm, his wife and two children, the one a boy of twelve years of age, called young Mick, the other a lovely girl of eight, named Mary. The parents of these humble cottage children were totally illiterate, an education they had never received, and for a time fancied they should never feel the want of it—nor did they, save when the Sunday evening came round, and the Bible was produced ; then, till the younger children grew older, there were none to read it ; and at such times the presence of the parish clerk or schoolmaster was hailed with delight as he stepped in for a cose with Michael and Radstock.

And thus, in this simple mode of life, time passed rapidly but quietly on. Their daily work was done, and little else was thought of by these two honest labouring men, but the comfort of their families, who, from constant association, became more and more united.



## CHAPTER II.

Ye friends to Truth, ye statesmen who survey  
The rich man's joys, increase the poor's decay,  
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand  
Between a splendid and a happy land.

ON a commanding eminence, well sheltered from the north and east by magnificent woods, stood, as it now stands, a massive pile of buildings, called Lindford Hall. It was neither of the Elizabethan, castellated, or gothic style of architecture—neither could it boast of much

outward beauty—it was and is simply an old substantial English mansion, solid and capacious—a fit residence for its wealthy owner, whose ancestors having built it long, long ago, had occasionally enlarged it, but in nothing added to its external embellishments—such as it was, there it now stands, in a beautiful position, defying alike time, wind, and weather, and there, I trust, it may remain for ages, a fit specimen of the home of an English gentleman, who could claim as his own, unmortgaged and unincumbered, the eight thousand acres which surround it.

If the house, however, had little to recommend it, as regards external beauty, internally it could boast of every comfort, luxury, and convenience, which the most fastidious could desire ; and the noble terrace, which extended along the whole southern front, commanded a view so splendid and yet so thoroughly English, that none could gaze thereon without combined feelings of admiration and pride, that

such was the land of his birthright, far and wide the rich vale of park-land sloped towards a wide and sparkling river, which flowed in varied course through the centre of the property, the whole scene being thickly studded here and there with aged oaks and wide-spreading beech trees—while beyond the park, rich meadow land and luxuriant hedge-rows added to the variety and beauty of the landscape, the immediate vicinity of the house being made still more desirable by spacious and well-kept flower gardens.

The secluded village of Lindford, with its ancient and ivy-covered church tower in the vale, was a marked object in the rural landscape, which extended far and far away to the blue and heath-clad mountains in the distance.

The season was that of early autumn, bright and balmy, such as our climate rarely boasts of, yet when we are so favored by Providence what other can vie with or surpass it.

On such an evening, in its full enjoyment,

were assembled on the terrace, I have already named, three persons in affectionate association. A man, who had numbered well nigh sixty summers—a youth of fourteen years of age—and a girl probably a year or two his junior. The man was lord of all he surveyed, and well might he be proud of such a lot—by the world he was called, Frederick Passmore, Esq., by the neighbourhood, and more particularly by his tenants, the Ould Squire, or Squire Passmore, of Lindford. In Scotland, his appellation would have been simply Lindford, the name of his village and of his estate—or the Laird of Lindford; but I speak of England solely, my native land.

He had married comparatively late in life, a young and beautiful woman—she had died in giving birth to the lovely girl, who now shared his affections with her brother, in proportion as the wife had been adored—and although twelve long years had elapsed since she had

been suddenly called from the cares of life, he still clung fondly, perhaps too fondly for his happiness, to her memory, as to the children who were alike his companions and his idols.

Mr. Passmore was a man of good birth, if not exactly of aristocratic descent; but he could boast of four generations of gentlemen owners of Lindford, and surely that was sufficient to satisfy the most fastidious, as regards his position. Moreover, he was allied by marriage with the first in the peerage, and titles and honors had been often tendered for his acceptance by more than one government, which, to do him justice, he had declined, preferring to retain his independence and the pleasures of a country life.

In politics, he was an undeniable tory of the old school. Obstinate alike in his opinions both civil and religious. A whig was his enemy--a radical his abhorrence; but in all

fairness, he hated what he believed to be the errors of the men—but not the men themselves.

The world would have pronounced him a most inestimable landlord, and with some truth, inasmuch as he lived the greater portion of the year on his estate, employed, or permitted those under him to employ, all who sought work belonging to his neighbourhood—and left his steward to receive his rents, which he neither lowered or increased whatever the circumstances; therefore, as, generally speaking, they were moderate, and the land rich, and capable of much improvement, the farmers became rich also, and were judicious enough to retain their own, and give way, on all occasions, to the wishes and opinions of their landlord.

Mr. Passmore was also pronounced to be a charitable man—that is to say, he never took notice of the account charged in his steward's books for poor-rates—that he did not heartily

exclaim against the obnoxious law, which he termed a forced giving of alms. Nevertheless, he was known, on more than one occasion, to put down his name for five hundred pounds, for the building of a church, or fifty to a charity headed by his sovereign; but if a relation in want had applied for half the sum, it would have been refused, not from penuriousness, but having no want himself, he could form no right judgment of the extent of it in others in the same position in life.

His cottagers or his tenants he rarely visited in person, not that he disliked or shrunk from association with the lower class, but that he feared coming in contact with those who had aught to demand or solicit; he cared not so much that they were relieved from his abundance, but where it was not of an amount sufficiently large to be published to the world, he scarcely cared to be informed of it himself. Yet he was by no means an unamiable man—or, on the whole, an illiberal man. Such were

his habits, nothing could alter them in youth—it was not likely they could change in age.

I will give one simple instance of real life—he had once occasion to visit the residence of his head gardener, who being absent, he had no other alternative but that of stating his wishes to his wife.

The good woman being alone with the Squire, and considering the opportunity too good to be lost, called his attention to her wants, in the way of a grate, stating that the back of hers was entirely worn out. This application was quite sufficient to cause his anger.

“Backs and fronts—backs and fronts, be d——d,” he exclaimed; “you folks are always requiring something”

And he instantly left the house.

The cost of this demand might have been about eight shillings.

The same evening, a splendid pier-glass ar-



rived by van from London, the price of which had exceeded fifty pounds ; whilst unpacking it a servant had the misfortune to let it fall, when it was smashed in a hundred pieces. On the squire's being informed of the accident, as also of the sorrow of the man, on whom it had befallen, he calmly replied—" Well, let him be more careful in future." Such was the man, such his eccentricities. There are many better, many worse, but, altogether, he was much respected, and much liked, if not beloved.

Of all his good qualities, however, the prevailing one was his devoted affection for the two beings who now gambolled before him on the terrace. As I have already stated, the one was a lad, just returned, in all the freshness and spirits of youth, from Eton for the vacation—nothing could exceed the interest caused by his animated and intellectual features, or surpass the easy grace of his slight and boyish figure—his dark and curly locks clustered on a brow open as the light of day ; truth, health

and intellect beamed in every lineament of his truly speaking countenance, which literally sparkled with joy and affection, as he bounded along the terrace with his adored sister and playmate, whose delicate little figure formed a truly lovely picture in contrast with his own more tall and manly one. The pale face of the boy was marked, and, at times, thoughtful; the still paler face of the girl was as delicate in every feature, and as expressive from every smile, as was her person elegant and graceful, even at that early age. And when her little heart, full of affection, first caused her to run along the terrace with her brother, and then to rush into the arms of her father, the sweet smile of childish happiness and innocence lit up a countenance shaded with clustering locks of the fairest colour, was such as would have made it difficult for the hardest heart to have refused her caresses, or looked on her without interest. Indeed, few who watched these children could condemn their somewhat aged

father from the knowledge that his heart doted on them with idolatry, and he loved them accordingly—and yet, to do him justice, they were not, as the world terms, spoilt.

The boy, previous to going to Eton, had been carefully educated, both morally, mentally, and most judiciously, by an amiable christian clergyman, who, if he had not instilled into his young mind principles or opinions precisely similar to those possessed by his father, had, nevertheless, formed the groundwork for the reception of others, which many, as our story advances, will admit were likely to be more acceptable to those with whom his future career in life was marked out.

Neither had the early years of his lovely little sister, Augusta, been neglected ; since the death of her mother, or, at least, as soon as she had quitted the care of her nurse, she had been placed under the charge of the sister of a gallant but impoverished naval officer, to whom, and deservedly, as she advanced in years, she

looked up to and loved with scarcely less warmth than a child would love her mother—and not without reason, for there lived not a more amiable, and high-minded, and sincere-hearted woman than was Miss Handly; and if the young girl considered her as a second mother, truly, she loved the little Augusta with all the warmth and affection as had she been her own child. True, she was one of those improperly valued class called governesses; yet, to the praise of human nature, be it said, the higher class of society, at least, have, at length, found out that the majority, better educated and even better bred than are thousands who presume to the presence of their Sovereign, are worthy of the highest trust and confidence, and truly do they often merit both love and esteem.

Such were the children of Frederick Passmore in the year 18—such the education and conduct pursued towards them, alike tending to their future usefulness to mankind,

and happiness to themselves, as well as to their safe guidance of the great charge which was bestowed on them by Providence, combining beauty, and health, and wealth, in all their several ways allotted to us—as are sickness, poverty and misfortune, not solely for our individual joys, pleasures, or sorrows, but as we shall sooner or later learn, for some good purpose to our fellow men as well as to ourselves.

Frederick, the name of the boy, was heir by entail to the splendid estate I have already briefly described, while his sister, if not equally rich, was still a wealthy heiress in her own right—the property of her mother, which was considerable, having been settled on her younger children.

## CHAPTER III.

Our farmers round, well-pleased with constant gain,  
Like other farmers, flourish and complain.

CRABBE.

I MUST now say a few words in regard to Michael Coddington, the friend of George Radstock the elder, and also a day labourer on the farm of Mr. Winter, whom I shall, hereafter, introduce to my readers; as was his friend so was he a simple, honest-hearted, uneducated, and hard labouring farm servant-of-

all-work ; to read or write he had never learned, or cared to learn ; he had been born, bred, and lived, some two score years and fourteen, in the village of Lindford, and the utmost extent of his wanderings was occasionally, during these long years, to the neighbouring market town, where, having faithfully delivered a load of corn or potatoes to his employer's customers, and having drank the offered pot of ale, he returned to his humble cottage, little caring for aught else in the world save his wife and children.

With his daily work, his mind, such as it was, was fully occupied, his whole heart being centered in the one desire of securing comforts by his labour for those who were dear to him. Never did farmer employ a more faithful servant—never did servant more justly earn his limited wages ; his wife, though not the best tempered woman in the world, was, nevertheless, as honest and as ignorant of all beyond the limits of the village as himself ; he had

met her, in former years with a milking pail on her head, as she had met him with a spade over his shoulder.

These meetings became frequent, and doubly frequent, and as

Love's feelings, even in the breast of a ploughboy,  
Is more soft and sensible  
Than are the tender horns of cockle snails.

Michael woo'd and won the blushing Harriet, expended a week's wages in the purchase of a ring, was wedded, and, in a few years, their hearth was gladdened by the birth of a sweet little Mary, and a robust little Michael Coddington.

As the parents of these children had lived and struggled on together in the same village, and tilled the same ground with George Radstock, the natural consequences were, that they should become warm friends, or bitter enemies; at least, such is unfortunately the course of



human nature with parties thus thrown constantly together ; happily, in this case, inclination was felt, or nature drew towards the sunny side—and the two honest labourers were warm friends ; and as time flew on, and their children advanced in age, the two families became more and more united—the younger ones meeting daily at the parish school, as the elders at their daily labours.

I must now introduce Mr. Winter, the employer of both Radstock and Coddington, a thriving, rich, country farmer. In the days of Queen Victoria, he would probably be termed a gentleman farmer, an appellation the meaning of which I am so entirely ignorant, that I at once confess my inability to explain it, inasmuch as I never could distinctly understand how a gentleman, who has lived on his rental, as had his forefathers before him for centuries, can be rightly termed a farmer solely that his tastes lead him to find pleasure in agricultural pursuits. In such a case, an

Earl or a Viscount may be so named, and for like reasons. I must own I do not clearly perceive the sense of this title being granted to a man because he has the good luck to rent good land at an easy price, or the good fortune to have heavy crops by which his means are increased.

If a gentleman farmer is so termed from his substance, I confess to have seen some of the roughest and most illiterate of gentlemen having a just right to claim the title.

I say this, however, without the slightest intentional disparagement to one of the finest and, generally speaking, most upright race of men that the world can boast of; I merely express a humble regret that the name of an English yeoman, in which there is so much to be proud, should be ridiculed, by the term gentleman farmer—a species of affectation from which many an honest man would shrink—however his daughters might be inclined to be members of the squirehood—which is, at times,

so preposterously granted to this landed community as to all other communities.

The time is by no means long, long ago, when walking across the country on a shooting excursion, any sportsman might enter the first farm-house he came to with the assurance of a hearty welcome. The owner, if present, was invariably dressed as an English yeoman should be, who attends to his out-door duties—he was up with the lark, and early to bed, smoked his clay pipe, and drank his mug of home-brewed, and was ready to share it with all who came in; his wife looked to the household affairs, baked the bread, cooked the dinner, and attended to the children, were they of sufficient age, the sons worked with the father, as the daughters assisted the mother.

The home of most farmers, however, is unhappily no longer such as I have here depicted. The humble simplicity and cheerful affection of its inmates, in most respects, have generally vanished, as new requirements have advanced

with the times, how sadly is best known to themselves.

Even if the head of the house still retains his love for olden times and rural habits, such is no longer the case as regards those who gather round his hearth. The sons go to school, some indeed to college, and why not—education is the greatest of blessings—simply that instead of learning to read and write, and obtain an education suitable to their position in life ; many return home with habits and ideas far beyond their station in society, and feelings totally at variance with their pursuits in the honourable life of yeomen, for which they were born.

While the father attends to the duties of the farm, the sons ride thorough-bred horses with the neighbouring hounds, and joining the yeomanry, infatuated with their gay attire, fancy themselves soldiers and gentlemen ; and the hand which was intended to direct the plough, or, at all events, the mind which, from

better education and experience, ought to stimulate the labourers on the estate to activity and energy, aims at higher things, many become dissatisfied with their position, and yearn to leave the peaceful delights of the country to mix with the city's throng—some become attorneys, others embark in mercantile pursuits, and not a few aspire to the pulpit. All these desires and changes fall heavily on the parent stock, and the consequences are becoming daily more numerously evident; not a farmer that does not complain of high rentals, bad crops, hard landlords, free trade, and increasing poverty, complaints at one time rarely heard.

If such is the case with the rising generation of farmers' sons, it is still more to be lamented as regards the daughters—girls who formerly assisted cheerfully at the wash-tub, milked the cows, fed even the pigs, and looked with pride after the poultry yard, and made the cheese, girls who arose happy healthy, and

fresh as the dew of morning, were dressed in the plainest and most simple attire, an occasional new ribbon in their Sunday bonnet, being an innocent source of enjoyment, and received as such, are now fine and well-flounced ladies. Indeed, few, if any, who can really claim that gentle place in society, but would blush to be seen in such flowers and finery. They are sent, some to cheap, others to expensive boarding schools, not to be taught morality and modesty, not to receive a plain and wholesome education befitting their station, or those to whom they have a right to aspire to in marriage—or to enable them to make good wives to honest yeomen, or formed for fond and virtuous mothers to those henceforth to become the pride of the land. But to dawdle away their time—precious moments of youth, never to be recovered—in learning, with much difficulty, a few useless notes on a cracked piano—a half acquired accomplishment, utterly useless hereafter, wasting an inconceivable amount of

money in German wool, all to ape the airs and graces of those to whom they never can attain, and with whom, neither by manners, birth, or station, are they entitled to associate.

What is the inevitable consequence, as the sons, so do the daughters, become disgusted with their home occupations and simple home pursuits, which they have some difficulty in forgetting, as few leave their homes for these finishing schools, till they have attained an age when their services are available.

Having been schooled, however, they return to distract the peace of the farm-house with gingling sounds which they all music, instead of aiding the unfortunate maid-of-all-work in her numberless duties, which far from lightening, they increase by their absurd ideas, that fine ladyism consists in idleness and vulgarity. They practise quadrilles, and even polkas, instead of mending their stockings and making their clothes. And the most extravagant finery of dress has taken the place of simplicity

and charming rusticity. Even balls and parties are constantly arranged for the benefit of these young "ladies," and their admirers, where white kid gloves for the gentlemen, and white satin shoes for their partners, are as plentiful as in Belgravia.

Scarcely a marriage takes place that bride-cake from the neighbouring town is not required, and orange flowers bedeck the head of the bride born to a mob cap. If there be a carriage within reach, it is hired for the occasion—if not, a fly and pair are put into requisition.

The bride, accustomed to walk all her life, must needs do as her superiors do; and the whole party, instead of walking to some beautiful ivy-covered, rural, village church, there to receive the blessing of a christian minister and amiable pastor, and make their fond parents glad with hope and joy for the future, by the knowledge that the happy pair joined



in love, and virtue, and innocent simplicity, are still to gather round their humble but generous board, and live on the same land, which their forefathers have tilled with their own hands, and watered with the sweat of their brow, behold them hastening to a neighbouring town to pass the honeymoon, there to squander in finery and foolery, a sum which would have supported them in comfort and honesty for a month or more, idling away valuable time in looking into shop windows, and becoming dissatisfied with their native village.

These are simple truths—but truths nevertheless are they, corroborated by each day's experience, deny them who can.

A month has scarce elapsed since, ere, in a western city, a ball was given by a wholesale dealer in stays—wealthy he may be, for all I know to the contrary—wealthy perhaps he is for a stay-maker—for the selling of stays im-

plies commercial dealings with bustles also, and bustles must indeed be a thriving trade, as not a woman in the land, save those whose minds are too refined, or whose bodies are too well formed already, but are deformed by such frivolities.

To return, however, to the ball—the following paragraph, copied verbatim from a country paper, thus informs the world—

“ WEST OF ENGLAND STAY MANUFACTORY.”

“The spirited proprietor of this factory, Mr. —, has just added to the extensive pile of buildings, occupied by him, at —, another spacious erection, which comprises three rooms of very large dimensions, and which, not the least gratifying part of the business, will afford employment to numerous additional hands. The event was celebrated on Tuesday evening by a grand ball and supper, given to upwards

of a hundred ladies and gentlemen, enjoying the personal friendship of the host, and the invitations to which were not confined to this city and neighbourhood, but extended to guests from London, Liverpool, Salisbury, Plymouth, Jersey, and other more distant localities. The dancing took place in one of the new rooms, which had been elegantly decorated with flowers and evergreens, illuminated by numerous gas jets 'peeping through the verdant foliage,' and was kept up with great spirit to the enlivening strains of a quadrille band, selected from the members of the B—— and C—— Professional Band, and led by its talented conductor, Mr. ——. At about one o'clock, the supper room, which was of equal capacity with the ball room, was thrown open, and seldom has there been provided a more *recherche* or profusely supplied repast. The *ensemble* was brilliant in the extreme, and the tasteful decorations of the room, the elegant adornments of the table, and the attire and

personal beauty of the ladies who surrounded the board, and whose

‘Bright eyes flashed love,  
To eyes which flashed again,’

conspired to realise some of glowing descriptions which we read in the pages of eastern romance. On Wednesday night, Mr. — gave a ball and supper to upwards of a hundred of the young women and men employed on his factory, as well as to a few of his private friends. Of course, the *employées* invited did not constitute a tithe of those engaged in the business of the factory, but the invitations were necessarily confined to those actually working within the building. This *fête* also passed off with *éclat*, and the recollection of the two evenings will not be readily effaced from the minds of those who were privileged to be present.”

Now I see nothing in the fact of a stay

maker giving a ball to his friends, in the slightest degree, to be condemned, and as for his entertaining his hard-worked labourers, who make the stays, by the sale of which he is enabled to entertain them, it is much to his credit; on my own part, I rejoice, most heartily rejoice, in anything which in the slightest degree tends to mitigate their toil, and fill their hearts with contentment and gladness, even for the passing hour; indeed, I know of few more fresh and joyous scenes than that of witnessing the happiness of my fellow men—the more humble their position, the greater delight is there in beholding any relaxation from toil, and sorrow, and want. Yet to see the ball of a retail merchant thus blazoned forth to the world as this was, to know that all the delicacies of the season were lavished on those whose daily fare for the most part is, or ought to be, of the simplest. It then becomes no longer a matter of astonishment that chartism, rebellion, bankruptcy, and

misery should increase, with their sad, sad consequences, and while such things are, there will still be discontent. I would desire to be understood, however, that I speak generally, not individually, both as regards persons as events.

I believe that a well directed education is the greatest blessing that can be vouchsafed to mankind ; but it must be an education suitable to the means and position of society, in which man is born, and not that which induces man erroneously to believe he can at once rival his superior ; such can only be attained by a steady onwards course, or some superior gift of genius which Providence has granted to the few.

I see no reason why farmers' daughters should not dance, or farmers' sons enjoy the sports of the field. Yet it is inconceivable to what errors, what crimes, what misery, a mis-directed course of tuition may lead—and truly—is a little learning a dangerous possession.

There are unquestionably many among the multitude whom God has blessed with more than common ability—more than common grace of mind others that are gifted with mechanical powers to excel in some marked pursuit in life, and where such abilities are discovered, or such tastes evince themselves, they never can be too much fostered.

Then with such a field marked out by conduct and perseverance, man may raise himself to the highest position in the land, and then the hand born to guide the plough, throw the shuttle, or sow the seed which yields the bread of life, should be warmly grasped in welcome in that which has never been hardened by labour.

Many a simple cottage girl, like the rose bud grafted on the hedge-row thorn, may bloom into life with all the charms of mind and grace, as pure and beautiful as the white moss bud which has been raised with the most tender care—and as the female mind is ever more

ready, if properly nurtured, to receive the gifts of education than man, and avail itself of the finest tones and feelings of society, when such is the case, how welcome are these children of nature's moulding to every class. Not are they, however, followers or imitators of those with whom, in birth they have no right to class themselves, and cannot justly imitate ; but marking out by powers with which nature has adorned them, a distinct line and position of their own, utterly unattainable by assumption or the copyist. With such, the mob, have not one feeling in common, not one taste in unison. But not the finest Cashmere that India can produce, or ever will produce, can make a farmer's daughter aught else but a farmer's daughter, as regards position in society, if her mind be not gifted by nature with far richer grace, than baubles, fine clothes, or ill-judged school instruction can afford it. Nor will all the attempts which man can make to intrude himself where neither



his education or genius has introduced him, make him a greater chieftain than a mob leader.

The aristocracy of wealth is a pleasant position, doubtless, for him who claims it through his banker, but without mind giving him a distinct claim to public favor, he is, after all, only the man made of money. But I must now return to farmer Winter.

## CHAPTER IV.

Few were their acres ; but with these content,  
They were each pay-day ready with their rent,  
And for their wishes, what their farm denied,  
The neighbouring town, at trifling cost supplied.  
If at the draper's window Susan cast  
A longing look as with her goods she passed,  
And with the produce of the wheel and churn,  
Bought her a Sunday robe on her return ;  
True to her maxim, she would take no rest,  
Till care repaid that portion to the chest.

SUCH was a farmer's wife, such a farmer's  
daughter in days now gone for ever ; when  
farmer and farmers' sons were not dissimilar.

Mr. Winter was, however, not a farmer of the old school, neither could he justly be termed a farmer of the new school. He had succeeded to a long lease of his present land, comprising some three hundred acres, which he held under Squire Passmore, at an easy rental, on the death of his father, who had been one of the most upright tenants and hard working men on the estate—by such conduct he had contrived to leave his son not only the lease which was immediately renewed, but also about fifty acres of freehold land at no great distance from Lindford, together with five hundred pounds in ready money. At the period to which I allude, the large farm of which he now claimed the ownership, had been in the possession of the family, from father to son, about three score years, and to do Mr. Winter justice, he was an honourable tenant and an amiable man, none paid their rent more punctually, and few did more actual justice to the land, but he did nothing more ; his lease was held on such easy

terms, that it paid itself, and considerably more. And he was not the man to expend a pound on speculative agricultural improvements, such as drilling or draining, though by such means his gains might have been doubled. The loss of a wife to whom he had been much attached, and who possessed more common sense than all the family, left him with little energy and no mind to the sole guidance of his two sisters, whose knowledge of the fifty-acre freehold and the five hundred consols, had caused them to imagine they were no longer simple farmer's daughters, but henceforth in a position to move in the same circles with the aristocracy of the county. In personal appearance, farmer Winter was what might fairly be termed an honest-looking yeoman, the greatest compliment I can pay him, robust, strong, healthy, and florid, and of middle age, his dress, when attending to his farm duties, was such as it ought to have been ; when in company with the Miss Winters he was compelled to appear in

a half sporting, half-flash costume. The elder of these young women was named Susan, after her mother, the younger Evangelica, and neither Susy or Gelica, as he called them, could remain in the same room, with vulgar thick shoes and bespattered gaiters, therefore, when in doors, his dress prevented strangers from doing full justice to his honourable calling, and at the same time left on the minds of those capable of some insight into human nature, an idea that he was ashamed of his enviable position, and desired to be thought that to which he could never aspire, not so much from want of means, but from his utter ignorance of all things tending to elevate man. True, he could read and write and keep his farm accounts, but nothing more. If he looked into a newspaper it was solely for the purpose of ascertaining the state of the markets; and as for a book, it was a rare event indeed, did his hand divide the leaves of one. Such was the brother of Susan and Evangelica, girls just verging from child-

hood into womanhood, with minds filled with all the extravagant follies taught at such ill-directed places of education as unfortunately now abound for young girls. I beg their pardon—young ladies. God save their pretty faces—'tis a term more readily applied than understood. Mr. Winter occasionally followed the hounds, not that he was a sporting man or a sportsman, but he was fond of gay companionship, and being a good natured, frank-hearted man, was popular among those who attended the meets. He was not a hard rider or even a second rate rider to hounds. Yet the strange weakness, that in a measure we can pardon, in which he held the opinions of his two fair sisters, induced him on all occasions, save those wherein agriculture was concerned, to be guided by them.

Thus, he appeared generally mounted on a horse totally unable to carry his weight, a barg tailed, thorough-bred pulling chesnut, or a switch tailed grey—at such times he was

invariably ridiculed by the gentlemen of the hunt, who, otherwise, respected him ; but his foible, as regarded these matters as the tastes of his young sisters, was well known, as were his means of being well mounted.

“Well, Winter,” said the kind-hearted Duke of —, master of the hounds, “what brings such a heavy fellow as you are out on such a thorough-bred rip as that?—she is scarcely fit to carry my second whip ; do let me see you riding something fit to carry such a fine fellow as you through two ploughed fields ; you will never see the stern of a hound again to-day after we find.”

“Why, your grace,” was the reply, “I’m just getting the nag steady for my sister, Gelica, when she comes home for the holidays, in order that she may attend your grace’s hunts. I calls her Jenny Lind, your grace, she is a sweet mare, I can assure you, and worth a hundred.”

“Well, my good fellow, you know best ;

but you would do well to let Gelica remain at home, and look after your household affairs, and attend the meets yourself, on a horse really worth a hundred guineas, on which, when your agricultural duties admit, you can enjoy a good day's sport, and do some service in the Yeomanry when called on for your country."

But farmer Winter, like many a younger farmer of the present day, was slightly tainted with the prevailing opinion, vulgar and untrue as it is, "that Jack is as good as his master," if he only have the gold, without having the good sense and reason to understand that, although in spirit such ought to be and really is the case in civilized nations, yet in fact, it is only in that place to which God has appointed us, till deeds of mind or genius justly place us in another. But this spirit of rival gentility was daily becoming more and more rooted in his mind, by the fostering care of the boarding-school misses; and Winter, the son, was fast losing all the noble feelings



of a British Yeoman, which his father had so truly possessed, and which caused him to be respected by the whole county—and which would have made him equally so, solely that Susy and Gelica had informed him each morning at breakfast, and each day at dinner, as each evening at supper, of that which Miss Snelling had told them, that their father, being a freeholder and a voter, was consequently a Squire, moreover, that a Squire was admitted at Court; sweet creatures, I cannot find heart to quarrel with you for your innocence, save that as you cast firebrands into the heart of man, and stir up evil passions, and discontent, and trouble, moreover thoughts and comparisons, which, but for you, and such as you, and the ill-directed education intended for your good, which has the effect of disturbing your humble minds, would never have found place there. Yet, when once ignited, how they blaze into light in men's minds—a light that burns away all reason and all virtue, and

ends in the abominable folly of imagined equality and rebellion alike against the laws of society as the love of God, ruin to themselves as to those they love well, and best would serve—ruin to their country, which, by idle words, they profess to glory in ; but on which, by deeds, they bring misery and want—ruin to its people, for whom, in angry terms alone, they ask for bread—and this they call liberty of opinion—equalisation of rights—a just division of property and place—in fact, though the expression is as simple to the theorist as it is deplorable in reality, Jack would desire to be as good as his master, though the means he uses to attain that end is the last to secure success, and if such were the result, he would not improve his lot.

Freedom ! alas, how little do we understand the true blessings of such term in its reality. Oh ! how fearfully is that best of gifts to man abused, which Providence would desire to bestow on the world. It is not by savage

acts, such as have disgraced the continent of Europe, debasing to mankind, and loathsome to those who have hearts to feel, and heads to lead them right, that liberty for man is gained ; but by a steady, honourable, yet humble perseverance in the career and position of life in which we are placed, and to which all our energies ought to be directed ; recollecting, that as neither our talents nor our wealth are given solely for the purpose of our own aggrandisement in a worldly position, so neither are they entirely for our personal gratification. If the weak and the poor are depressed and humiliated, it is not by physical force, or by open rebellion, in a land like this, that they can ever hope for succour ; but by patient forbearance—hard though the task may be—and the knowledge that the voice of every man, whatever his lot, is, or ought to be, listened to even by the first minister of the crown. Indeed, the amelioration of the cares and wants of the poor and friendless, the patient and

deserving, ought to be the first cry responded to by a noble and christian nation. And alas how deeply my heart deplores that, even while my humble pen traces these lines, that he\* lies cold in death, who, only a few short years since in the very pride of manhood, was working his laborious way to the pinnacle of power and usefulness, and encreasing his value in the affection of his countrymen, with a heart ready to awaken at the first cry of distress, and, at the same time, endeavouring to place, on a foundation of adamant, the practice of that law, which, in a moral point of view, alone is the most beneficial of all the enactments of modern times.

While I deplore, and in the highest sense of the term abominate, chartism and all such enemies to wholesome freedom and constitutional liberty in like manner, I confess equally to deplore the unmanly spirit of despotism, and

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\* Charles Buller.

all tending to damp the free source of thought and opinion, as all things having a bearing to prevent the most thorough freedom of civil and religious opinions. I may abhor popery, still more so the English version of it Puseyism—yet I know of no cause for an individual disrespect even in fancy for the Pope. I have a far greater disgust for the puritanical spirit which now stalks on stilts high as St. Paul's—the religion of the mouth, or of outward form—ever eager to condemn one's neighbour, while a very mean amount of religion of the heart prevails throughout the land—that religion which casts a ray of cheerfulness and kindly feeling on the face—that religion which knows how to enjoy in full extent, and divide with others the many blessings and pleasures of life, as are they given to be accepted—and in like manner, I look on the system of the age, which is jumbling all classes into one unexplainable, undefined and undesirable position, either from error in education, or the sound apprecia-

tion of it ; from such thoughts and causes arise much which must bring unnumbered miseries to our merry England.

But the Miss Winters are now at home, freed from boarding-school duties for the holidays, as is young Frederick Passmore, their brother's future landlord, for the Eton vacation.

Let us pay them a visit at Ashton farm ; it is truly an English scene of rural beauty, a fit abiding place for two such country graces—yet far more fit for what they ought to be than what they really are. Their mother, good, humble-minded woman, was wont to think the comfortable, clean, and tile-floored kitchen, with its large, bright fire-place, its settles, which sheltered alike the visitor as the dwellers therein from the rough blast of winter without, was a pleasant resting place, and there was placed the snug, old, leather-covered arm-chair in which her husband was ever wont to smoke his pipe, and read the country paper ;

it was good enough for her, and while she looked with eyes of admiration on the well-stocked racks of flitches of bacon and hams, all her own curing, for winter consumption, how little she thought of, how much less she cared for the fineries of the little parlour, which, though neatly furnished, was seldom put in requisition, and seldom wanted. There, for forty years, she had passed her days in more than common happiness and ease, resigning at length a well-spent life, with the fond hope that such as this home had been to her, such it might prove to those whom she left behind with many blessings and much affection.

When, however, the old hen bird quits her nest, the youthful flock, who have gathered around her for protection and support, soon become separated and alienated; and the male, unable to provide for their wants, and sooth them with the warmth of his wings, either neglects them, or leaves them to their fate.

The case of a mother and her children is not dissimilar. The mother dead—the father—I speak of humble life—either indulges them to their destruction, or leaves them to their own resources, not from want of love, or affection, one jot less strong or less tender than the wife, but from the utter impossibility—particularly, if his charge be that of females—of appreciating or understanding a woman's mind—boys may do well enough, but girls, more especially, if in the position of life of which I write, when deprived of a mother's guidance, may be compared to a brood of young ducks, hatched and matured by a hen ; no sooner are they fit to take the water, than she may cackle in vain, all her authority is over, all their love passed. They float, they swim, they dive into the stream of life, regardless whither it leads, uncontrolled by the tender care of her who gave them to the world, and with each change they are carried here and there regardless of all save freedom.



Such was the precise position of the Winter girls—the aged father having lost his beloved partner, more to him than life, became changed, his home comfortless ; true his only son, then an adult, aided him in his daily farm pursuits ; but when he returned, after a day's labour of superintendence, to his mid-day meal, it was no longer prepared as it was wont to be, though perhaps, on the whole, he had little cause for just complaint, still these matters once the tender care of a wife, were now left to the hand of the maid-of-all-work, and when the evening returned, and he had to place his accustomed chair by the bright fire, and fill his own pipe, simple as were such duties, they painfully recalled his loss. Yet as his young daughters played around him, he caressed and loved their presence. But things were not as they had wont to be, and his heart, once cheerful as the lark, which carolled on his way as he went forth each morning to look over his rich pastures and golden corn-fields, saddened—till

he pined, sickened, and died, in peace, to follow her he had loved so well. Not, however, to leave those of his blood, now gathered round his hearth, in poverty, or want, but with the additional freehold, and the pecuniary resources I have named, together with a well-stocked farm, and the faithful promise of a renewed lease—to commence a new era—and float onwards with the world, and its reformation.

Mr. Winter, the younger, to do him justice, grieved sadly for the loss of his father, as he had sorrowed still more truly over the death-bed of his mother. But time and tide runs through the roughest day, and he had grown to years of reason if not precisely to discretion, when thus finding himself the comparatively respected son of a wealthy farmer. He followed his tastes and pursuits with much good will. So the farm business still thrived, the oxen still fattened, though not exactly to the extent of the show prize cattle, which is positive cruelty,

without the least advantage to the public generally, or to farmers individually, and the crops multiplied abundantly.

Ashton farm was still as Ashton farm had been for years, a pride to the county.

At the death of their mother, Susan and Angelica were mere toddling infants; and when their father was called to his last account, though some years older, they might be still fairly termed, wild, happy, laughing girls; but now that a few more years had elapsed, they had become young ladies, a term pleasing to them, and of small note, in these precious times of misunderstood equality, they were now recently returned from a country boarding-school, for their brother loving them as brothers should love sisters, though not wisely and perhaps too well, having the means, had given way to all their fancies, and permitted their enrolment among the members of Miss Snelling's establishment for young ladies, as it was wont to be termed. Alas! what

deseccration to the true reality of a title to which so limited a number, in all its meanings, can justly lay claim—a name not always secured by birth on such sure grounds as by grace of mind, combined with nature's high breeding.

## CHAPTER V.

Oh, knew he but his happiness, of men  
The happiest he ! who far from public rage,  
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.

THE farm of Ashton differed little in most respects from many other farm houses, which may be daily seen in almost every county of this favored land. Oh, how abundantly has God in His great goodness blessed such charming rural spots, formed for peace, and love, and contentment, combining, at least, in

the eyes of all who behold them, the many advantages, which should form the simple yet heartfelt expression of Home sweet Home.

Look from the honeysuckle-clad rustic portal, on the rich vale below ; far and wide are seen luxuriant fields of rich grass land, almost ready for the scythe ; acres of corn, already slightly tinged with a golden hue, are waving in the breeze their newly formed ears, which, in a few short weeks, will supply the bread of life. The cattle clustering beneath the wide-spreading elm-trees, or chewing the cud, sheltered from the scorching heat of the mid-day sun. The curling smoke of many a rustic cottage—the sheep-bell tinkling on the hill—the distant bark of the watch-dog—or the glittering spire of more than one humble village church towering above the foliage in which they appear in the distance as if embosomed.

Such are the scenes of home, of England—

there is no fiction, no romance, in such portraits, they are common, as the mountain to Switzerland, or the moor to Scotland; and who can look on such without a feeling of calm peace, and comfort, and pride. The prairie may bewilder the eye with astonishment that ranges over its vastness. The snow-clad mountain may strike awe into the heart of the beholder. The wide spreading lake, or the deep blue sea, are each, in their way, ever changing scenes of delight and pleasure.

The splendid works of man which mark the proud city, realize all our ideas of art and science, and genius, and wealth, and rank, and power; and yet when we look on the humble English cottage, with its cheerful garden, well stocked with bright flowers, and its cleanliness, and apparent absence from all want, and thence on the more attractive farm-house it speaks more truly of the land we live in than all the city's splendour can effect. Yet perhaps the visitor from foreign lands, who first rambles

through our cities, and visits our shores from motives of mere simple curiosity, is more struck by the munificence of our different charities, and their vast establishments which are scattered in such abundance throughout the land. From the red brick alms-house, with its little white-washed chapel, to the magnificent hospital with its Ionic portico, and its Tressles embossed with relieve symbolic of its character. The metropolis alone is crowded with these beautiful evidences of the generosity of our population. Balls, concerts, sermons, lectures, and every conceivable means are resorted to for the accumulation of funds for the relief of the destitute and unfortunate, and scarcely on any single occasion is the appeal fruitless or the effort ineffectual ; orphans and the children of honest but impoverished parents are fed, clothed, and educated ; the sick, the blind, the infirm, the insane, those who are afflicted with any mental or physical malady ; with disease of body or decay of mind are equally cared for and in-



discriminately protected. In fact if any one virtue more than another is peculiarly national in England, it is most assuredly the virtue of benevolence. While however the stranger looks on these magnificent proofs of English generosity and charity, let him also, when travelling through the land, be mindful to watch the homes of its rural population, scenes will then present themselves to his eyes and to his mind, which will tend to convince him of the joys of home and peace, and he will carry back to his father-land, simple memories not readily to be effaced.

Let us now endeavour to introduce our readers to Ashton Farm. The house stands on a gentle slope not a mile from the village of Lindford—the country around it abounds in rural charms, wood and water, and corn land—in itself it has little to boast of, save as regards its ancient and wood carved gable ends, and its rustic porch, near which stood three majestic elms called by the country folks the three



sisters ; beneath which was placed a seat, commanding an extensive rural prospect. The house was a large thatched building, with scattered out-houses and barns in its rear—not over clean or well arranged—a stack-yard which contained some eight or ten ricks of magnificent corn, and numerous tons of the last year's hay, gave ample proof, that if things were not precisely in the aristocratic order the Miss Winters would have desired, they still afforded ample evidence that Mr. Winter was not in a position to oblige him to force a market for his rental. If the house was not peculiarly commodious, it was nevertheless tolerably capacious. The picturesque and rustic porch, led through a narrow and paved passage, on the termination of which another door was placed, to prevent the current of air which would have blown through the house, in as much as another passage, almost immediately opposite, opened towards the farm-buildings; to the right was a tolerably sized room, called the best

parlour ; in the days of farmer Winter's father, it had been rarely used, and very humbly furnished ; to please his youthful sisters, however, the son had totally metamorphosed the appearance of this apartment, and it now boasted of a second hand Broadwood piano, always out of tune, a rose-wood centre table, a few books of the day, and a chimney-piece covered with ornaments, made by the industrious hands of the fair Susy and Gelica, while the back of the only arm chair the room possessed, was covered with an anti-maccassar, said to be the last production of the elder Miss Winter, under Miss Snelling's tuition.

What the nature of the music in the music stand, or what the subject of the books it would be impossible to say, nevertheless there they were, as are they to be found in the boudoirs of fair ladies, and here, in this bright parlour—for bright it was, looking on a southern landscape, and occasionally well-stocked with sweet smelling flowers, culled by the Miss Winters' hands—did these

yet youthful girls love to dwell, and show off their attempts at fine ladyism, when absolute duty or necessity compelled them not to assist in the kitchen or the laundry. We should perhaps properly term this the dining room, instead of the parlour, save that were I to do so, I should be at a loss to find a parlour, in as much as the room next entered on the left, was one which had been for years, that in which the family were wont to live, and was in all respects fitted for a farmer's comforts or those of any other man, not from his position and habits in life entitled to ottomans and Turkey carpets. And to do young Mr. Winter justice, he seldom left it for the more refined abiding place of his sisters, save to obtain their society, or to receive their friends. True its flooring was of brick, and its furniture the plainest, but the large open fire-place without a grate, a fit place for the burning of the Christmas log—and many a Christmas log there had been burnt—and the old fashioned screen, to

protect the limbs of the aged from lumbago, and the bright logs and old Winter's tobacco box on the high old oak-carved chimney-piece, with a few rural and sporting prints around the room, made it a most desirable retreat; one that few men would refuse to call their own on a cold winter's evening, and one which none could enter without a feeling of comfort and cosiness.

Still to fine gentlemen and fine ladies it might truly be termed a kitchen, as indeed it was at times made use of as such, and many other uses, such as a dining-parlour or breakfast parlour.

The farm, nevertheless, also possessed a kitchen, and a most ample one, and also a dairy—its principle ornament—and in this the Miss Winters took some delight; that is they interfered with the dairy-woman when occupied in preparing her butter for the Wednesdays' and Saturdays' markets, and as they had read, somewhere, that the Queen patronised dairies,

and was wont to visit them about luncheon time, they made that hour convenient to their brother's habits, and farm duties, which necessarily obliged them to dine at the plebeian hour of one, and consequently with a crust in hand, and as they grew older, occasionally a novel, also, they paid the dairy a visit about eleven, dipped their fingers into the cream, took a small quantity of new milk, spoilt their whole dinner, and caused annoyance and vexation to the humble servant who delighted in the cleanliness and order of her arrangements. On such occasions, the following dialogue would take place.

"Now do, Miss Susy, leave that cream alone, I've barely enough to churn six pounds of butter, promised to Mr. Ludlow, on Saturday next, for the cook told me they were about to give a party, and all the butter was required to make the pastry."

"Nonsense, Sarah, nonsense, leave me alone. Mr. Ludlow, indeed, giving parties, who ever

heard such nonsense—a village attorney—let him get his butter elsewhere; and who is to be there at this grand party, to eat up all the pastry, I should like to know? Why we have a knight's two daughters to associate with, at Miss Snelling's, and we are great friends, and they told me their papa never associated with attorneys or doctors—not he—or curates either, nothing under a vicar or a physician was ever asked to dinner. Our brother is a freeholder, we have fields of our own, and votes too, and we never give parties. To think of the impudence of Mr. Ludlow to give a party and eat up all our butter."

And with this she upset the cream, tossed her head, and walked out of the room.

Such trifles may give a simple idea of Miss Susan's opinion of herself and her neighbours; but we shall soon become better acquainted.

The remainder of the farm-house consisted of several comfortable bed-rooms, the only one, however, having the slightest approach to

elegance, being that inhabited by the two sisters, which they had endeavoured to turn into a species of *boudoir*, from ideas formed by the books that they had smuggled among the school girls, and the hints afforded by the knight's daughters.

As yet, however, we have not personally introduced the farmer's fair sisters to the public; the elder, Susan, was now seventeen years of age, or rather above it; her younger sister, Angelica, barely sixteen; happily these two girls were closely bound in sisterly affection and love, though, of characters and personal appearance, totally at variance; the elder was a dark, tall, not unintelligent-looking girl, but weak in purpose, and carried away by any fancy of the moment, vain of her personal appearance, which was not unattractive, with an ardent admiration for dress, and everything coming under her denomination of genteel. Her greatest desire in life, young as she was, was to ape the mode and manners of her superiors, and ridicule her inferiors; such



was the whole character of her existence. She knew no want, and thought little of it in others. To secure the admiration of all the humble class, and be, the associate of those in a higher circle, was all her aim, all her thought in life ; mind she had none, and though not without strong natural affections, she had little real heart—at least, her heart was not so regulated as to prevent her breaking that of others, if necessary to her purpose—in fact, even at that early age she had learnt sufficient at her boarding-school, if nothing else, to make her a flirt—and flirt she was—a rural flirt, whenever opportunity offered itself, and for the time being, with whoever might present himself.

To order the only in-door servant to do many things she might have done herself, to dress in some little bits of new fashion or finery, and to appear at church in a bonnet bedecked with most elaborate trimmings, were then her chief delights, to say the least of them ; and here we must leave her. Angelica or Gelica as she was

usually called, was as different in person, in mind and character from her sister, as it was possible to be ; she was no favourite among the young farmers—indeed few seemed to attach themselves to her, nor did she to them ; she was, nevertheless, possessed of qualities far superior to the rest of farmer Winter's family.

She had a mind, and a heart, and a kindness of purpose, which only required to be known to be appreciated.

At the second-rate school—for be it recollected I am speaking of Yeomen's daughters—at which she was now being educated, she formed few what are termed friendships—her whole and sole delight, when not attending to her instruction, was that of reading—and read she would, unimportant the book—history, biography, or novel—whatever she could obtain she read, and read thoroughly ; when at home, instead of making bonnet caps, or flowers, or love to the young farmers, or the workmen, or worrying the unhappy servant, she passed

whole days in reading ; her only friend being a large black cat, who followed her from room to room, and place to place, like a dog.

When dinner was ready, she never appeared till she had finished a chapter ; when it was her turn to make the tea, a book was ever at her side—in fact, instead of mending her clothes, assisting in the household affairs, or doing ought else which farmers' daughters ought to do she was reading ; while the one sister amused herself in finery and flirting, the other did nothing but read and play with her cat ; and when one walked into the village of Lindford to pay a visit to the draper's, the other rode a shaggy pony to the grocer's, who also boasted of a circulating library containing about three-score of miscellaneous volumes, for the most part of very inferior character.

Gelica was by some called fair, by others a brunette ; she had a well rounded and tolerably well formed person, save that the taciturnity of face, on which a smile was rarely seen, rather

gave one the idea of sadness or sulkiness, neither of which feelings, however, she possessed, inasmuch as there were times when absolutely tired with her books, she could dance and romp, and be as merry as the merriest ; but this was not her general taste, and the moments were rare.

Such are true specimens of farmers' daughters, in recent times, when landlords were said to be ruined, and tenants paupers, and with this for the present, I must dismiss them, nevertheless, with a firm belief, that although agricultural distress may exist, and did exist, to an extent which filled the heart with pain, it, nevertheless, bore no comparison to that which was seen, felt, and abounds in manufacturing districts.

No, thanks be to God for the glories of the country. The green field, the bright sun, the luxuriant, clustering woodlands, are all, in their several ways, gifts which soothe the heart even of the most wretched ; and even when

the country is clothed with its most inclement winter's garb, it cannot have—truly has not—the overwhelming depression of the dark and dingy environs of the smoky city. Be the circumstances of poverty and wretchedness what they may, I never look on the humblest cot, in the most barren waste, that I do not fancy a death-bed of starvation must be preferable there, than amid the dense and fevered haunts of the hard working mechanics.

The feelings which country air and country associations inspire, must also tend far less to demoralise even the mind of the ignorant; and though want—hard and bitter want—may reign, for a time, at the rural cottage door, the return of spring and summer generally brighten's man's heart as the replenished face of nature brings back his daily food. For the ground must be tilled, the wheat sown, the harvest gathered, though the sound of the mechanical mill-wheel may be heard no longer.

## CHAPTER VI.

In spring time we rear, we do sow, and we do plant,  
In summer get victuals, lest after we want ;  
In harvest we carry in corn and the fruit,  
In winter to spend, as we need of each suit.

A PLEASANT place, and a peaceful abiding place,  
was the village of Lindford ; pity that the  
curse of political partisanship, and religious controversy,  
should ever have found it out. Almost  
a pity, I was about to say, that education—  
though education, properly applied, is the  
greatest of blessings to man—should ever

have entered that happy rural retreat. Pity that beer-shops should have accumulated—pity that speculative madness had not remained in the cities, than to have wandered there, and changed the whole face of that tranquil spot by a steaming, smoking engine, and a station ; and though Lindford still has its ivy-covered church, its sparkling river, its broad fields, and its rich woodlands, its houses are doubled, as are the wants and requirements of its former simple inhabitants.

When my story opens, however, the residence of Michael Coddington was one of the most simple and most humble of rural abodes ; the reader will not have much trouble in realising its description—not a country village of England but can produce its fellow—consisting of two or three rooms, with a small out-house, or general store, and a plot of garden, wherein the monthly rose flourishes, and in more recent days, the brightest of dahlias, and the many-coloured hollyhocks bloom and abound.

The kitchen was the public-room, indeed the home of its inhabitants. And here, on a fine autumnal evening, a cheerful and much loving, though most humble labourer's family were assembled. The windows were thrown open, for the weather was sultry, and seated around their frugal supper-board, were gathered, father and mother, daughter and son.

The meal was truly simple enough ; but yet how sweet and welcome to those who have earned it by the labour of the day, and have never felt the want of luxuries. It consisted solely of a coarse brown loaf, some cheese, young onions, and a bowl of milk ; but those who partook of it were simple in mind, and as free from care as was the fare homely, and while the honest, hard-working man helped his loved children, and had the joy of their presence, little cared he for ought beyond his roof.

How fondly that untaught, uneducated man listened to the childish prattle of his



darling Mary, who was now pouring forth, in tones of almost infantine pleasure, the doings and sayings of the parish-school. How the fond mother treasured in her heart the frank and bold remarks of her boy, who, older than the sister, now corrected her village tale, or chided her young flow of spirits ; truly it was a pleasant scene for the eye of man to dwell on —truly is it a welcome one for the mind of man to fancy.

These village children, so young, and yet so superior, from the little knowledge they possessed, above many others, and though, in good truth, their station was of the lowest to look on them, would have charmed the painter and engaged the heart of all. The little Mary, fair as the lily, with large laughing blue eyes, looked up to the face of her rough and honest father, who, delighted with her prattling fondness, now laid aside the hunch of bread and cheese, which formed his well-earned and wholesome supper, to part, with apparent ad-

miration, the golden and silky looks which shaded a countenance almost angelic. And when the speaking mouth opened to reveal some new source of pleasure, which had occurred during their morning rambles from the school-house, he closed those lips with his own rough ones, and folding her in his arms, pressed her fondly to his breast, with the sole utterance of "bless thee, my darling."

And the boy, his countenance bore few marks of beauty; but what is, perhaps, far superior in man, honesty shone truly forth on his open countenance, and if genius or talent reigned not there, intelligence and firmness of character were as distinctly marked, as were kindness of heart and simplicity of mind.

These were the inmates of the cottage, these the beings, and there are many such, who, though born and bred beneath a roof of thatch, nurtured in nature's simple lap, often rise by honest labour, and virtuous paths to walk on

carpets of the finest loom, and raise the name of man to a nation's pride.

Sneer not, ye fine ladies, who walk in silk attire, taunt not, ye would-be-aristocrats, because wealth, a fine robe, or a plumed hat, carries off; to the world, your presumption and vulgarity; there is many a flower which has found root in the garden of a labourer's cottage, which has bloomed into life with far more beauty, and elegance, and sweet odour, than those who have been nurtured in the richest hot-houses of the great. But let me, trifling as the subject, give, in their simple truthfulness, a few words in illustration of the perfect innocence of these children.

The humble meal over, and the things put carefully away, in which the little Mary was wont to assist, the family, in summer, went forth into their little garden, to water their few blooming flowers, or to cultivate the small plot of vegetables, which the limited size of

it admitted of their rearing, and then prayers being read by one of the children, who were even now sufficiently educated for this christian duty, they retired to refresh themselves by sound and innocent sleep for the duties of the morrow ; whereas, in winter, this happy circle assembled round a cheerful fire, to talk over many a subject, and tell many a village tale, for beyond its limits they had little knowledge and little thought ; they knew that God was father to them all—they knew and acted up to that knowledge far more truly than those who know tenfold better, and acted tenfold worse—that to do His will was their duty, and they knew also, for it was the reign of kings, that it was loyal to honour their sovereign, and well to obey the law, though, in good truth, the latter is somewhat difficult as it is constituted, which oftentimes appears a safeguard for rogues, and the ruin of honest men. But I speak of woodlands, and vales, and

flowery meads, and cottage gardens, and not of dens of roguery and hard-heartedness ; so welcome be the village fire-side, for there sits Coddington when the wind whistles without, and the snowy flakes fall thick, with his darling Mary on his knee, now kissing, now hugging, now laughing, at her innocent recitals—and there also sits his good wife, knitting her stockings, and there is Michael the younger teasing the cat—such are rural pictures and home happiness

“ Well, my child,” said the elder Coddington, giving his girl another hug,, “ where wert thou this morning ? thou werest not home to the hour from school.”

“ Why, father,” said the lovely child, smiling in his face, “ I was up to Henbury for barm—mother wished to bake.”

“ And who didst thou meet with, pet, to make thee linger so long ?”

“ Why, father, I met with a gentleman.”

“ And what did he say to thee, child ?”

“ Why, father, he said, ‘ where art thou going, little girl ? ’ says he.

“ To Henbury, says I.

“ ‘ What art thou going there for ? ’ says he.’

“ To fetch barm, says I.

“ ‘ What dost thou want with barm ? ’ says he.’

“ To make bread with, says I.

“ ‘ Cannot you make bread without barm ? ’ says he.’

“ No, says I.

Here Coddington chimed in—

“ What more said he, child ? ”

“ Nothing, says I.”

This conversation, absurd as it may appear, nevertheless, actually took place, and the simplicity with which it was told was quite sufficient to cause merriment to the circle.

On another occasion, this child, who, henceforth, will take a prominent place in these pages, was reciting a dream she had had the night previous, when the laughter which rang

round the room, caused her innocently to declare she would never dream again ; but these little trifles make the sum total of cottage life, and nothing, though they be, these nothings, have their weight with those whom they concern, as much as a forthcoming ball at the Palace, or a rural *fête* at Chiswick, have on those for whose luxuries they labour. And it is greatly to be deplored, that the spirit of vice, and grumbling, and discontent, should ever enter there to make such smiling faces sad, or such simple honesty aspire to that which makes them poor indeed.

Hence good and evil mixed ; but man has skill  
And power to part them, when he feels the will ;  
Toil, care, and patience bless the abstemious few,  
Fear, shame, and want, the thoughtless herd pursue.

Michael and his children had lingered long in the garden—for the evening was one of autumn's finest—the father had been hard at

work all day in the harvest field, for farmer Winter had a splendid crop, the stacking of which would be soon completed, and his duties called on him to rise by daylight, while the children proposed accompanying him on a gleaning expedition before they went to school.

They were just about to enter the cottage, when the latch of the garden wicket was raised, and the friendly voice of Radstock the elder was heard in terms of greeting.

“Well, Michael, ’tis glorious harvest weather, we mon be up by times the morning, Mr. Winter says the ten-acre field must be all down to-morrow as he intends to give the harvest home on Friday next; and all on us, young and old be to be there, so I thought I would just call in to tell the children, for I know their young hearts will gladden at the news.”

“Thanks George, thanks, come in man, ye



be always welcome, and we can spare a mug of beer for the like of you, old friend, though it's not to be said it's strong beer, yet my missis did brew it, God bless her ; so run Mary, run child, and give George a welcome cup."

"No, Michael, no child, no beer to-night, thanks to you kindly for all that, but it's over late, and we must be up with the sun, so good night, and God be with you all ; come give me one buss, my little puss, you'll be queen of the harvest home if you meet with your deserts, my little beauty ; and by-the-by, the ould squire, and the young squire Frederick, and Miss Augusta are all to be there, and the young ladies—for such they be called now, up at Ashton farm, since they've been to that boarding school—have hands at work to decorate the barn for a dance, better, they made the plum puddings.

"Aye, Michael, well, Sally says they baent over fond of using their hands at any work,

though pudding making be light labour I count, nevertheless, my little puss here be more like a lady any day than they."

"Why, George, what's the matter, I seldom ever heard the man speak in ill terms of living soul before that I knew of, what have maisters daughters said to thee, to offend, aye, George."

"Why, nothing man truly, nothing, but in old Winter's time Ashton Farm was Ashton Farm, and nothing more, and when you and Mark were wont to tend the maister then, he spoke friendly and frank, as one of we. 'Wilt have a mug of ale man, or a crust of bread and cheese, George,' and the like of that, and young maister to say the truth be still much loike his old father, but the young misses, I cannot understand them much, it is 'Mr. Radstock this and Mr. Radstock that to such as me, and if I goes up to the farm as I did this afternoon being sent there by maister, with a message, on my way home, I seed no inside of a kitchen but a parlour, furnished a bit like the

steward's room, up at the hall, and there sets Miss Susan, a ginging the piany, and Miss Gelica lay straight out on a sofa, a reading, well then I sends in my message, out comes Sal, to say that I be to go to the young ladies ; so as I goes in, says Miss Susan—' Good evening, Mr. Radstock, will you please to take anything after your hot day's work,' and Miss Gelica adds—' When did Mr. Winter say he should be home.' as if brother was not polite. As for my boy, they have well nigh turned the lad's head already with schooling, I means George ; but good night neighbour, good night poppet—good night Mich."

And our honest labourer went home to his larger, but still happy family ; while Cod-dington and his household were soon sound in a sleep, such as the wealth of Europe could not purchase, or the genius of man command.

## CHAPTER VII.

In harvest home, harvest folks, servants and all,  
Should make, altogether, good cheer in the hall ;  
And fill out the black bowl of blythe to their song,  
And let them be merry all harvest time long.

In days long, long, ago, a harvest home was a  
flow of happiness, merriment, and content, if  
not a feast of reason. In more recent times,  
it was a source of annual pleasure looked  
forward to by old and young, master and man ;  
on the part of the one as having secured his  
fortune for the year, on the other that the labour  
of weeks being over, they were now at com-

parative rest from toil, and had earned their well-deserved trifling increase of wages, with which cottage rent was to be paid and children clothed. In the days in which we live, the golden sun still rises in glory over the rich corn lands, and brightens the labourers' way, sinking with the same splendid refulgence over the western hill, as he winds his tired way to the joys of his humble home. The same abundance, the same hospitality still exists, equal merriment however, though happily it still lingers in the land, is not so generally to be found, when the ripe corn is gathered to the barn, and the field is once more cleared to receive the coming seed time. In fact, the joyous harvest home, like many pleasant charms of olden times if not already a beauteous picture solely to the memory, I much fear soon will be so, and once in those rural and peaceful homes, where all alike from lord to labourer met in cheerful communion and abundance, happy in themselves, thankful to God for His

blessings and joying in the good fortune of a neighbour, are now being fast converted either into drunken meetings, where the clamorous and discontented hold forth in bitter language against their superiors, or complain of bad times, bad crops, and worse wages, which are, nevertheless, little different from those when contentment issued from rough lips in song and laughter, and all was thankfulness to God and peace with man.

Will any one, in his sober reason? can any man, boasting of the name of Englishman? a boast all men desire, look on the rich broad lands of this favoured and happy kingdom without pride—is there a man I say with principle at heart, and honesty of mind, be his sufferings what they may, save those of the very dregs of our people, who will not spurn from their door the selfish un-English spirit which is abroad, sheltered under the name of peace-making, and which is fast undermining the olden days of

honest labour and content found beneath the thatched roofs of our humble cottage labourers.

Liberty—freedom ; but delightful words if properly understood and acted up to—

“ What art thou freedom?  
For the labourer though art meat,  
And a lonely table spread,  
From his daily labour come,  
To a neat and happy home.”

But out upon such terms, if not so ; liberty is alone to be secured by an honest submission to the crown and the law ; we are all equal in the eyes of God, all open to His pardon, all cared for by Him, it is not in anarchy and rebellion that aid comes, but in a patient suffering and submission.

Order, industry, and labour gains freedom, not the freedom which rebellion would give, which is the freedom of the outlaw or the

rebel, bringing heavier chains than poverty will ever bear, or starvation ought to seek.

But I have wandered from my pleasing scenes, —like the former days of English harvest homes, so were Christmas festivities supported in the country. The farmer then had little thought that his stock would be prematurely spent, he had then no daughters who required singing masters, or ran up bills at milliners'. He had no sons who hunted in scarlet, or rode horses fit only for the race course ; his barns well stocked, his rick-yards well filled, made his rental day not one of fear or pressure, but of cheerful thought that having honestly paid his way, his yearly gains still improved, and the evil day was ever far in the distance.

While the bright wood fire blazed on his hearth, mirth and carol and song went around, and neighbours went from house to house to partake of the abundance cheerfully offered by those who possessed it, and the poor were fed



at the same board as the opulent; such were the former days of rural life, would they were so now, and such would they have been had not the intolerant bigotry of the few, a bigotry which happily is fast fading, save in the minds of those who have risen from the dregs of society by speculation or lucky chance, termed the aristocracy of wealth, not of blood, for these latter generally speaking, are the most liberal and unassuming class in the kingdom. While men, unexpectedly enriched, with hearts as hard and heads as dull as their metal, are the spirits to crush the humble, and tyrannise over the poor, at their door, and such as they, may be, laid the first foundation of discontent, and the first inkling of that low and ill-directed feeling that "the man is as good as his master," with a good coat on his back, and that the flounced petticoat and flowing plume can make the fine lady. In either case mind being out of the question.

It was the evening preceding the harvest home, the sun sinking in all its golden refu-

gence, already gave place to the rich August moon, which shone in all its glory over the splendid vale of Lindford. The barn bedecked with flowers, and hung with many sconces for lights, was prepared for the festivities of the morrow; abundant large plum puddings, numerous rounds of beef, pies and poultry, in preparation for the feast, filled the larder.

And although the Miss Winters had ordered, bustled, scolded, and commanded all these desirable eatables for the expected guests, little had they done to aid the maid-of-all-work, and her attendant charwoman, hired for the occasion.

They had gone hither and thither incessantly, and worn poor George Radstock, the younger, off his legs, with messages to the shops, where everything in the small way and large way was to be purchased at Lindford, from a cheese and a hat to a ribbon and gloves, and fatigued they were, and fatigued they well might be, with doing nothing. Winter himself had of course

been fully engaged in the fields, and the last load from the ten-acre field was already in the yard ready to be stacked on the morrow.

So the fair sisters reclined on a bank without the rustic porch of the farm, embowered beneath sweet smelling honeysuckles and blooming roses, while George, still lingering near his adopted mistresses, waited their further commands previous to joining his more humble friends at home.

“ Well, Gelica,” said Miss Susan, “ I am really half dead with these preparations ; and, after all, for what have we laboured ? It’s all very well for brother, who is a squire by property and by birth too, for he is a freeholder, to entertain the squire, and his steward, and Master Frederick, and Miss Augusta, and Lieutenant Murdoc of the Marines, who, after all, is only half a gentleman, fer I am told he is on half pay ; but really to think of all the vulgar, low, labouring men that are invited. Dear me, should any of these fellows ask me

to dance, I shall never erase the dirt of their hands from my glove, or make them understand the steps we have learned at Miss Snelling's."

"Nonsense, Susy—nonsense, dear—I shall do just what I like; I mean to sit by the side of young Frederick at supper, or this soldier officer, and make George here sit on the other side, to keep the rustics off. Brother pays them for their labour, true, but it is well to give them a day's merriment; and as the old squire will come, perhaps he will ask us in return to the hall."

"Ask us in return to the hall, that would indeed be delightful; what would I not give to dance a waltz in such company; indeed, I see no reason why he should not ask us, we are as good, and richer too, than half the young parsons, who are continually dining there. But what do you mean to put on, Gelica dear? we need not dress, for these people, you know, as

we do on our dancing days, and yet a white muslin, and a blue sash, become me well ; and I must show these young farmers that we are not exactly of their class, and keep them at a distance."

"Dress as you like, Susy. For my part, I care as little what dress I go in, as I do for the young farmers ; and if I do not find it pleasant, I shall just go up to my room, and read 'Pickwick,' better company any day."

"Those everlasting books ! you can talk of nothing else ; but do listen for one minute—what are we to do with all the brats of children. There's Michael Coddington and his two—and you know both the squire and brother thinks highly of this man—and both Master Frederick and Miss Augusta have often said they think the little Mary the nicest girl in the village."

"Well, and so she is the nicest girl in the village, and her brother is the nicest boy ; but I forgot George here—George is my darling."

Would she had never said so, may be, he never would have left the rural scenes of his boyhood.

"Well, give them plenty of pudding, and let them enjoy themselves."

"But we cannot pay attention to all ; there is also George's father, and a host of brats coming."

"Well, let George's father drink, and George's mother and sisters eat and dance, and be merry, that will do, will it not, George, my lad ?"

"Yes, Miss Gelica," said the boy, with a quickness for which he was noted, "anything will do that pleases you."

"Bless the boy," said Susy, "how polite he is ; "why really, the lad's quite a gentleman ; 'pon my word, Gelica, you'll be making George in love with you ere long."

"Pooh," replied Gelica ; and plucking a rose from the cluster at hand, she threw it into the boy's face, saying, half kindly, half authoritatively—"now, George, it is getting late—you

must go home—but be sure and come up early on the morrow, for we want you.”

While Susan, adding—“Good night,” with the condescension of queen, laughed aloud at her own thoughts, which though I read them, I cannot tell.

At this moment, however, farmer Winter’s voice was heard, singing a rural song, and having entered the garden from the farm buildings, he exclaimed—

“Come, girls, let’s have some supper, and to bed, for I am weary, and do you, Susy, draw me a glass of beer, for I am dying of thirst.”

But Susy never drew ale with her own fair hands, or did ought in her estimation half so vulgar—the squire’s daughter would not do it, why should she—so Sally, the everlasting slave, brought the ale, which was all Winter cared for, and the supper being over the party separated. Winter to sleep, Susy, to put out her dress for the morrow, and Gelica to finish

the first volume of a novel, and fancy herself the heroine, and George the hero, formed to her fancy, and led to greatness through her fortune.

Well, good night, Mr. Winter, and you, thoughtless girls, I am tired also, and so good night.



## CHAPTER VIII.

The very larke—the messenger of day,  
Salueth in hire song the mounne gray ;  
And fry Phœbus rises up so bright  
That all the orient laugheth at the sight,  
And with his stremes drieth in the greves,  
The silver droopes hanging on the leues.

SHAKESPEARE.

NEVER morn broke brighter than that selected  
for the rural festivities of Ashton farm, scarce  
a cloud floated on the deep, blue vault of  
heaven, scarce a leaf rustled in the woodlands,

scarce a dew-drop lingered on the rose-bud, ere true to the words of the poet, the glittering sun-rays kissed it away. Higher still and higher, the lark rose in the balmy air, charming the ear of man with its thrilling notes, all nature was brilliant and gay. The smoke's blue wreaths already ascended from many a homely cottage in the vale—the low of the distant herds winding their way to the river side—the village common spotted white with sheep, whose leader's tinkling bell fell on the ear as music calling forth the labourer to another day of life. O, man, why should such scenes as these which nature's God has granted to us all, be ever blotted from our minds, by the contaminating pangs of jealousy, envy, and discontent, why should these gardens of Eden, pictures of the fancied paradise, become theatres of sin, passion misguided, and ambition misdirected. Let me, however, cast away these thoughts of sadness, and look on the world in nature's garb of rural simplicity,

leaving till it comes alas, how quickly, the bitter pang of life's reality. All was gay as the morning at Ashton.

Farmer Winter was already abroad superintending the unloading of the last few loads of corn, which had been carted the night previous. Radstock and Coddington were there too—and others, all busy as the bees, which buzzed about the flowery garden. Work was to cease that day at twelve, when all the men were to be dismissed, with a full day's wages; in the afternoon, the labourers' families were all to assemble beneath a large spreading walnut tree behind the farm, there to enjoy their simple gambols, supper was then to be demolished in the barn, and then a dance.

Earlier than was her wont, Miss Susan rose from her bed, to prepare her brother's breakfast, and give the finishing orders for the night's supper, while Gelica, as was her usual custom, lingered away another hour of this beauteous morning in her bed, to finish her

last new book, permitting Sarah to convey to her bed-side the lady-like breakfast of a cup of tea, and some home-made bread and butter. The book finished, however, she arose, apparently little caring for the festive scenes about to take place, nevertheless, she had an eye on all, and ears for everything that passed.

Having descended she went forth into the garden followed as usual by her black cat, which, for what reason I cannot explain, she called Binkle. Binkle was her favorite pet, as was George Radstock her slave and page of all work. And there was George, true to his order, watching at her window, and awaiting her approach.

“Well, George,” said the young girl, laughing, “I am glad to find you so readily obey my orders—what a beautiful morning—too fine indeed to be passed in amusing the village brats. Had not brother insisted on this being the day for the beer drinking, and pudding eating, I should have ridden Dumpling to the

village for another book. This is the day of the carrier from Brigstock, and he was desired to bring some ; however, you, George, can run down, you will be in good time, the people will not assemble till the afternoon. But what's the news this morning ?”

“News !” said George. “Why Miss Gelica, I called in at the Coddingtons’ as I came up to Ashton, and found them half crazy with pleasure. The young squire, Master Frederick, has sent little Mary a new dress for to-day, with a message to say his father wished it worn on account of her behaviour at school. It is a white cambric frock they say, with a pink ribbon, and Miss Augusta has ordered Mick to go up to the hall to lead her pony, as she will ride down to Ashton.

“Well, wonders will never cease, little Mary, indeed, in a white dress and pink sash.”

“Here, Susy,” said her sister, as the former joined them in the garden, “hear what George has been saying. Miss Mary is already

chosen queen of the harvest home ; I do think it would have been more respectful had the old squire given his heir to understand that the daughters of squire Winter, the tenant of Ashton Hall, were more fit associates for him than this pale faced fair-haired child of a day labourer."

"You are right," Gelica, replied her sister, "and I shall make these people understand their place, "but I forget they are friends of yours, George; well, never mind, you are Gelica's page you know, but the daughters of a wealthy farmer have a right to some place in society, as well as that proud Miss Ludlow, the attorney's girl."

And Gelica proved that George was her page, for she ordered him forthwith off to the village—hot as was the morning—for more books and more news, while the sisters, indignant at the apparent insult which they conceived had been shown to them by the selection of their labourer's daughter for a favour bestowed

at the hands of their landlord, put their wise heads together with a determination to resent it.

Come with me now, through shady lanes, and across flowery meads to the village of Lindford. George Radstock is already leaving it on his return to the farm, heated and hurried, with books under his arm ; but young as he was, Gelica had already cast a spell around him, partly from his boyish idea of her supposed superiority, yet far more so from the pride of heart, a feeling she had instilled into his young mind that she was a person of some consequence, and to be her companion when out of school was a far pleasanter occupation than working in the fields or tending to the cattle, winter and summer as was the constant task of his elder and uneducated brother ; add to this he saw her ever well-dressed, and apparently with nothing to do ; consequently if in her own ideas she wished to be thought a lady, in his she most decidedly was one. I shall leave him on his way,

and enter his father's cottage where a merry hum of happy childish voices told a tale of light and youthful hearts ; to them the scene they were about to visit, was one looked forward to throughout the year ; nearer and nearer as it approached the days were counted, a day of happy infantine enjoyment, soon over but never forgotten. I have already said that Radstock's family consisted of two sons, and two daughters. The sons I have already named, the daughters had nothing to charm the eye of the beholder, save that their clean, cheerful, healthy countenances depicted the happiness that existed in their humble home, and did credit alike to both their parents, who on such humble means could so far have supported them in respectability ; the two girls were nicely dressed ready for the pleasures of the day, and doubtless few were there who witnessed that scene of rural festivity, who went there with a full spirit of enjoying it, and



returned with that spirit unalloyed, save in regret that it was not to come again to-morrow.

The same rural picture presented itself in the cottage of Coddington; one child was also there, the little Mary, her brother had just gone with pride to the hall, to lead the pony of the squire's daughter as requested. And this lovely girl was already dressed in the gift so unexpectedly sent that morning, to her humble home. Few mothers, though their homes be covered with thatch, and their hearts as simple as that of the child now bedecked in what to her was regal finery, could have looked unmoved or without pride on that sweet young face, though in many a heart that pride, if reason and good sense would reign there also, but would have felt some strange misgivings that one she loved so well, so fondly, that one hitherto, who had never worn aught but the simplest cotton, should be thus attired, and yet to others who gazed on that young countenance

beaming with sweetness and intelligence, it was evidence sufficient that if pride was there it was solely the pride of what to her, was a little finery, while not a spark fluttered in her young breast, or one feeling save the unaffected knowledge of her station, which no pink ribbons, or fine dresses could alter. Early as was then her age, well she knew she was a labourer's daughter, and nothing more; her youthful sense made her grateful for the gift and thankful to the giver, but she took it simply as it was intended, as a proof of her good conduct and advancement at school, and while human nature made her little heart beat with a feeling of delight at the beauty of the dress, it equally beat with a determination, by continued energy, to prove her gratitude to the giver, and become, through powers of mind, powers worthy of the gift, as of the regard of her superiors.

There were others in addition to these humble cottagers bidden to the harvest home, at Ashton

farm, the village schoolmaster, who also acted as the clerk of the parish.

The village all declared how much he knew :  
'Twas certain, he could write and cipher too ;

\* \* \* \*

But past is all his fame : the very spot,  
Where many a time he triumph'd is forgot.

And the village apothecary as he was called ; the time had not advanced these gentlemen to the position they now hold, and to which their education and attainments, generally speaking, so justly entitle them ; he was one who sought the poor man's bed of sickness with a full heart, and an ever soothing hand, with the same haste, perhaps far more, than that with which he obeyed the rich man's call in pain, and tendered the best of his services. Walking through

those pageant bands towards the scene of merry-making might also be met him who—

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorned the venerable place ;  
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,  
And fools who came to scoff, went home to pray.

Indeed few were those failed to join the feast where all were welcome, and those few were deterred by duties which admitted of little relaxation ; the mother to her infant child, the daughter to the bed side of her ailing parent ; for, woman, truly may it be said, your most admirable position is by the sick bed of the aged, or by the sorrowing couch of youth ; few, few, indeed are the scenes more beautiful in life, than that of witnessing the high bred matron when the pangs of physical pain lays low, the partner of her heart, who throws aside all pride of place, all worldly thoughts, and cheerfully undertakes the most menial of-

flees for him she loves; and not one jot less beautiful, though to the eye of educated man less striking to watch the village matron, or the village maiden, soothing the pains and tending to the wants of the sick and sorrowful. I will leave these best of nature's children in God's own keeping. God bless the poor, say I, and help them He will, who call on Him in Christ's name; they may suffer here, but hereafter how abundantly will be their reward.

And now let us turn to gayer scenes; joyous groups are already assembled beneath the ancient walnut trees, peals of merry laughter echo over the fields, frolic and happiness is at its full height, would that it was ever so amid nature's beauties, for say what they may, preach what may, the Pharisee, and canting hypocrite, the joys of this life were not given to man to be entirely forsaken, nor are scenes of pleasure always scenes of vice. 'Tis the abuse, not the use of all that is beautiful in nature and wonderful in art, that is detrimental

to mankind. The smiling face and happy disposition are the surest proofs of the highest, and most virtuous hearts ; on our own part we prefer looking into the bright and sparkling river rather than the deep and silent pool ; one is God's own handy-work, the other the toil of man. But now, alas, religion of the mouth is truly the fashion of the day ; scarcely a house is entered but that the matron, be there one, tenders her gospel opinions, doubtless with the idea that she is offering you a passport to heaven. Her intentions may be good ; I can in all humility fully believe they are intended as such ; yet is it not a clear demonstration that the party thus offering theological counsels would desire to say ; " I thank God I am not like those of your set." Better, far better were they to prove their christianity to the world by their actions, and let the pureness of their heart's charity stamp the fact on their cheerful faces. Such people send to a starving man a tract, and tell

the sufferer to trust in God for his meal, and then go home to dine on venison and turtle, or all the luxuries which man can supply, or wealth can command. Let them go, I covet not their feelings, or their abundance, I love to see a happy joyous group of smiling faces, and bounding hearts, so I shall take the arm of the village schoolmaster, and hasten to Ashton, he will tell me something of his scholars, for I am already interested with the career of many of them.

## CHAPTER IX.

Yes, let the rich deride, the proud disdain  
These simple blessings of the lowly train ;  
To me more dear, congenial to my heart  
Are nature's charms than all the gloss of art ;  
[joys where nature has its play,  
The soul adopts and own their first born sway,  
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind, unmolested,  
[unconfined.

It is not my intention to give any detailed description of the happy day passed by the lads and lasses at Ashton farm—many of my readers, doubtless, have attended a harvest



home, and, like myself, many have, doubtless, there felt greater delight in witnessing and joining in the merriment of the rustic dance than they ever experienced in a heated drawing room, where envy, jealousy, and hypocrisy marred the atmosphere of true enjoyment; it is with the revellers rather than with the revels, however, that I am more particularly concerned, and I must do justice to farmer Winter's abundance as well as to the Miss Winter's superintendence of the feast; and yet, perhaps, the arrival of the last load and the subsequent festivities, would not convey half the joy to man as that afforded to him who looks on the rich harvest fields mellowed by the sunset of ages. He then recollects that this has been ever a season of rejoicing. Thinks of Ruth "weeping amid the alien corn." "Our Saviour gathering the ears of wheat on the sabbath," and a hundred other incidents which are connected with the sacred history of our religion, and our country. Yet beautiful, as a

writer truly says, as may have been the harvest fields of Palestine or Egypt, they could never have surpassed in picturesque effect those which we have seen in our native land, our own England, hemmed in on every side by rich and park like scenery, and none more beautiful than that of Lindford Hall; through the green woodlands of which the worthy squire, as the afternoon advanced, drove to the scene of mirth and merriment. The cheerful groups there assembled, would have formed a beautiful picture; as the aged assembled in twos and threes were discussing the beauty of the weather, and the fulness of the harvest, or the coming of the squire, while others watched with a parent's eye of love the merry gambols of their happy children; the mother not a little proud to see her darling Mary selected by the young squire, Frederick, as a partner in the dance, while George Radstock, the younger, beheld with beating heart, and the early jealousy of youth, his selected mistress whirled away in the

brawny arms of a rustic. His fear and excited feelings, however, were scarcely formed, than allayed, by hearing her voice in terms of kindness, call him in the ring. And the fair lily of the vale, as was termed the old squire's daughter, how gracefully she danced, how lightly her elastic limbs moved along the short turf in happy companionship with young Mick, proud, as well he might be, of such a charge, and such honour as to be her partner ; indeed, there were few more lovely, few more natural pictures, than that which presented itself at farmer Winter's harvest home ; young and old, rich and poor, high in birth, and low in station, seemed there to mix with one feeling at heart, of love, and laughter. And yet, though real fraternity of mind did there in truth find place, position was not for a moment forgotten, or aught of that frivolity mixed up with the revelry, which, causes the mind to be unhinged, or the heart to beat with envy. If such was there found, I must con-

fess it was most apparent in the face of Susan, who was more beflowered and bedecked with finery, than usual ; her sister also was somewhat over dressed, yet, to do her justice, if she was not friendly to all, she was unkind to none ; for the moment she appeared to enter fully into the gambols and happiness around her, while her elder sister stood somewhat frigidly aloof, showing her condescension to those she deemed her inferiors, and a sort of tolerance to her equals ; superiors, in her own opinion, none were there, not even young Frederick and his sister ; true she looked on them as the children of her brother's landlord, and a trifle richer, but a squire's daughter was a squire's daughter, and she saw the texture of the little lady's dress as well as that of her much loved governess, Miss Handly, was far inferior to her own. She addressed the child, nevertheless, in fitting terms, and welcomed her as the guest of her brother ; the governess, however, she deemed quite beneath her notice, and treated her ac-

cordingly ; in fact, as she would have noticed any other woman present, with a decent gown on her back, and bonnet on her head. It would, however, be difficult indeed for man to read the hearts of those assembled in such communion as this, though much may be gathered from the speaking countenance, and the cheerful voice, yet where all appeared in full enjoyment, let me hope no bitter care was there.

What were the influences of such a meeting ! In those assembled it must be for time to elucidate. If man asks his own heart, or can call to memory, the early scenes of boyhood in which he has been an actor, he will scarcely recollect one, from which, in after days, he cannot find cause for reflection, either from sources of pleasure, or of pain ; a word said, which has passed heedlessly at the moment, when years have flown, may be recalled with a weight attached to it, heretofore totally unobservable.

The very same thing occurs in after life ; though the sense of remembrance may not be

so strongly retained, yet occurrences of the very slightest import at the moment, often divert the whole course of our lives from causes of joy or sorrow. Such was precisely the case with many of that happy group now before us; when farmer Winter kindly approached dame Coddington, and with half rustic, half what Susan would have termed a genteel attempt at wit, and pronounced that young master Frederick was already half in love with the little queen of the harvest home; the mother smiled with joy at witnessing the sweet happy face of her child, and entered into all the child's enjoyment, as mothers do who love their children; yet she thought little of the child's beauty, and less of farmer Winter's words, she knew her child was happy, and she was happy too; and when Susan flounced up to a somewhat half witted son of the village apothecary, and said, "why, you stand there, master Stow, like that young George Radstock, who has no eyes but for my sister Gelica," she little imagined that

she had said aught but the first words which passed across her mind, as she floated through the assembled friends to see that the early supper was prepared. Previous to the squire's arrival, while he rides his steady cob quietly towards the farm house of Ashton, I must relate a few words which passed among the children thus so pleasingly thrown together. With the grace of a gentleman in mind, and the manner of an Eton boy, and yet with a heart as gentle as was that young mind superior to the common lot of man, the rustic dance being over, Frederick led his blushing little partner to a bench beneath a wide spreading walnut, and having seen her carefully seated thereon, placed himself beside her, many an artist would have gained a proud place in public estimation who could faithfully have presented on canvass, those young, but interesting children.

“ Well, my little Mary,” said Frederick, “ I trust you like the frock my father sent you ; he

is much pleased with your conduct at school, and says, if you improve as you are now improving, he must have you up to the hall as a playmate to my sister Augusta, besides Miss Handly can give you a few lessons in schooling, somewhat better than our old village dominie."

These were words of delight and happiness to the little girl, who, from earliest infancy, had received attention from the squire's children, and her little eyes almost filled with tears, as she gratefully thanked him, who was, in her estimation, so greatly her superior; and with such feelings she truly honoured him, though in her youthful fancy she equally loved him for his kindness.

"Well, Mary, don't cry, child, you ought rather to laugh, queens never cry, and you are the queen of the feast, and I shall constitute myself the king, as I shall be in the course of nature over these broad lands, and then I shall make you, queen of Lindford, or my little Cinderella. But really you look very pretty in your



neat little white dress. Eton boys have all a lady-love more beautiful than all others in the world, so, henceforth, you shall be my queen of beauty, and I your cavalier."

Gladly and joyously the little girl laughed at all this frolic, which sounded strange to ears that had rarely heard aught but rustic language, yet the voice of young Frederick was not unknown to her, or his kindly manner, for as I have already said, the children of the hall had often taken much notice of the children of the village.

The *tête-à-tête* of these young minds, however, was broken in upon ere further words were said, by the presence of Miss Susan, who, in all the dignity of hostess and vulgarism of Miss Snelling's boarding-school tuition, came to request Mr Frederick would, on the arrival of his father, take some lady of her selection to the top of the board, and conjointly with him, do honour to the feast, the word honour she would have dropped as too

condescending, but it came naturally to her lips, and nature the most beautiful of all language for once escaped them. Frederick, however, had no such feeling :

“ You will excuse me, Miss Winter,” he replied, “ our little queen here, has selected me as her sovereign for the night, and I feel so proud of the compliment, that I have determined to attend her commands for the remainder of the evening, therefore, with many thanks for your intentional kindness, we will sit below the salt, but with her majesty’s permission, before the largest pudding. You recollect the school fable—doubtless Miss Snelling has taught it to you—at Eton we often have the whole version to translate as an imposition. ‘ He that exalteth himself,’ you know the rest. But do tell me, what is the matter with poor George Radstock, he appears bewitched, and does nothing but saunter about at the call of Gelica Miss Gelica, I beg her pardon; who is her stout companion ?”

Now Miss Winter felt the claws of Satan on her heart at the rebuke she received, only in proportion, however, at what she felt was outrageous in the young squire, that he had not selected herself or sister as a partner for his admiration, rather than the gentle little labourer's daughter, who then sat by his side drinking into her heart all his words of kindness, and laughing right merrily at such part, as she rightly understood, of his merry conversation. She could not, however, sufficiently smother her indignation so far as to prevent her exclaiming.

"My sister is dancing with a fat fool, who, like George her slave, has taken it into his head, that her book learning, and her beauty will make a fine lady of her, but she will make them fetch and carry like water spaniels, and at last drown themselves in the stream, where she will still float with a book in her hand, and a cat at her heels," and shaking out her locks, she hurried off.

But let me say a word on the subject of the

conversation which passed between the parties we have named, and to whom George Radstock was sufficiently near to hear all that passed.

“ Well, Miss Gelica,” said he, “ this is a pleasant scene, and a gay one, moreover, one to which I have looked forward to. You recollect when we were younger than we are now, we used to pick cowslips in the meadows, and go to the village school together ; since your old father died, however, times have changed, and while you attend to learning, I am bound to the plough, for our farm is not over thriving, while your brother Winter seems to make gold out of clay. I feel towards you, nevertheless, as I was wont to do when a younger lad, and I trust you do not forget the encouragement you were wont to give me, when you said you would be my little wife, as I your little husband, for indeed I love you well, dear Gelica.”

This simple appeal to other days, and present feelings might have had some weight

with a woman; whose heart was differently moulded than was that of Miss Gelica Winter, and if that heart had been in the slightest degree touched with the feeling of love, the breach would possibly have been opened, and the castle surrendered. Such, however, was by no means the case with our friend. She fully recollected that the lusty partner by her side had in earlier days, plucked the first primrose or violet, or the later blooming cowslip for her acceptance. She also well remembered that he had not seldom lifted her over the stile, and carried her school-books; but he was then a rosy boy as was she a laughing school-girl. Times had long since changed; Richard Wallop had become a first-rate follower of the plough, a probable successor, of his worthy hard working parent, as the tenant of a small farm; if, however, his physical powers had expanded, his mind still remained in a measure stagnant in the first rudiments of education, he had nothing more, how was he likely

to obtain any higher station. The girl, however, on whom he had already felt disposed to bestow, indeed, had bestowed the first love of his rustic honest heart, had formed very different sentiments of love and marriage ; what Miss Snelling had not taught her, novel reading had, and while she listened with comparative attention to the outpourings of his true feelings, those words touched not her own, save to bring cause for laughter and contempt.

“ No, Mr. Richard,” said the gay girl “ we may have walked in the meads, when foolish children, it was an age when all are thrown together, rich and poor ; the village schoolboy as the squire’s daughter ; but, pray cease with your words of love, which are really exceedingly polite, but more fitting for the ears of our maid Sally, than for mine. I have listened to them, and danced with you, as you justly say, for the sake of other days, but I do not intend to pass my life in a labourer’s

oot, or village lodging ; as the times advance, so do my hopes, the man who has learnt, must learn more ere he aspires to my hand. In fact, I want a hero ; find me that man, and I care not whether he rises from the plough, or aspires to the senate, in his endeavours to save the people, and put down the overbearing of our would besuperiors. In fact, I rather admire these chartists that have risen in the land, and I am half determined to select for my husband a chartist leader." With this she quitted the side of her rustic lover, and gaily laughing, passed the listening George, whom she beckoned to follow her to the barn ; forgetting that every word she uttered conveyed the very sentiments she professed to despise.

Mr. Passmore had now arrived at the merry meeting, and as the aged gentleman rode into the field, and dismounted from his quiet cob, and received a respectful welcome from his rich tenant farmer, Mr. Winter, scarcely a hat in the whole assembly but that was raised

to greet him, or a voice silent where all were ready to welcome him. Yet it would be difficult to analyze the feelings of that motley crowd ; doubtless, many were there who really felt esteem, even affection for him, who was looked upon as the greatest, as he was the richest man in that part of the country, and they formed their opinions of most other men, and most other places, by what they saw with their eyes, and not by their imaginations, for few had either mind or education ; moreover, those who saw their superiors contented, were disposed to be contented also with their own more humble lot ; therefore, if few among the number really loved Mr. Passmore, there was not one present at that harvest home who would willingly have done him an injury, or said a word tending to disrespect.

Such was a harvest home of olden days, would that we could witness such more frequently in these ; but while the grass still grows, each spring as luxuriantly and green, the hay still gathered



in abundance, the corn still ripens, and the golden harvest falls to the sickle, while the rose and violet still smell as sweet, and the sun still shines as gloriously in the blue vault of heaven on the wide rich lands of England, man alone is changed; the words liberty, freedom, and then lastly, reform, first breathed by the few, were loudly echoed, till every infant in the land was taught their sound without their meaning. And yet, what blessed words they are if rightly acted on, and fully understood ! how blasting to every home, to every nation; when used only as a means to attain an end ! tenfold more oppressive than the bigotry and abuse they would desire to extirminate from the land. God grant us, however, true liberty, freedom, and reform, and may He defend us in like manner from bigotry and despotism, chartism and rebellion, which, could England ever for a week endure, would fast make head against the tide of happiness and peace of our rural districts by the utter annihilation of distinct position, of master

and man, landlord and tenant, merchant and shopkeeper. In fact it is as difficult in these days to define what, or who is a gentleman, as it is difficult to persuade the aspirer to the title that he is not justified in its assumption; the man desires to be master, the master lord, without first proving his powers of mind for the position he aspires to attain; and so we advance, till all classes being jumbled together a new era will commence. Recollect, however, as the river passing through many a rich inland from its source, at length joins the wide waters of the ocean, so will man, if he have genius, pass through the multitude, and find his proper level.

## CHAPTER X.

A time there was ere England's griefs began,  
When every rood of ground maintained its man ;  
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,  
Just gave what life required, but gave no more :  
His best companions, innocence and health,  
And his best wishes ignorance of wealth.

THERE lives not the man who could have gazed  
on the cheerful, contented faces, gathered together  
around the festive board in farmer Winter's  
barn, who would have denied that contentment  
dwelt there, at least for the time ; whether it  
arose, however, on the part of the labourer,

from the knowledge that the season of his greatest toil was over, and that while he had aided in gathering the abundant and golden harvest which gave riches to his employer, it secured bread to his family, or whether to the parents the joy of seeing their children happily congregated around a well supplied board, or that the owner of the land felt proud at finding himself surrounded by his tenantry, and duly respected in that enviable position, I cannot say, yet merriment, love, and laughter dwelt truly among the throng without one apparent care resting on the countenance of any, or one face bearing the stamp of aught but contentment, save it was that of the elder Miss Winter, and hers never easy, was now more difficult than ever to read. I shall not dwell however on the pleasures of a harvest home feast, which to many, and those not only the younger assembled, consisted, in some measure, in the more gross enjoyment, though, by-the-bye, refined enough for those who rarely

find themselves at liberty to help themselves, *ad libitum*, to a cold sirloin or a stately gammon. I fear me, however, that such things rather were than are, though it is to be hoped that hospitality has not entirely faded from the rural districts, indeed nothing would give me greater pleasure than that of seeing many of our landlords, who, of late, have been wont to spend their rentals in foreign lands, lavishing their thousands on foreign hotels, foreign baubles, and foreign artists, exactly in the position of Squire Passmore that evening at Ashton farm; were such the case, assured am I it would tend far more to the prosperity of our glorious country and tenfold more to the decrease of misery among the poor, than all the useless time lost in parliamentary discussion, or all the financial dreams of D'Israeli.

Far be it from me, however, to presume to advocate an opinion so contrary to every spirit of freedom, as that of fettering minds and intellects, by a want of association with the strangers of

other lands, or to infer that those having the means should not visit them. It is indeed, or at least ought to be, a portion of the education of the higher branches of this favoured land, by every means, to seek a knowledge of other countries. In doing so, however, why forget their own? Man was not granted hereditary wealth for the sole purpose of his own amusement; man was not granted talent to use it solely for his own enrichment; neither ought the possessors of ten thousand acres to forget the many hands employed on that land who cause it, under Providence, to yield to the owner the wealth, which so many lavish on idle frivolities, fashionable extravagances, gambling, horse racing and useless abundance. Neither is the thriving manufacturer granted that success in his trade, or the rich merchant suffered to gather in the wealth which his hard worked mariners bring from foreign shores, given in abundance solely that he may vie in splendour with him, whom the chance of birth has

placed in a more exalted worldly sphere of hereditary possessions. My theory may be judged wild, and yet there are many who will go far with me in the belief, that even were the landed interests of this country properly and practically watched over by those who have the good fortune to possess them, there is scarcely an estate but would not yield more than sufficient for all, even of the luxurious wants of the rich, unconnected with vice, and yet support, and well support, as every estate ought to do, its own poor. Why have the miseries of Ireland entailed such a terrible burden on this heaven blessed England? why are we taxed, impoverished, almost beggared in purse, and pained to the heart's core, by the daily increase of sorrow wafted across the Channel from a land formed by nature for all that is beautiful, bright and peaceful; instead of being the birth-place of bloodshed, murder, and rebellion, not solely, but in great measure, that her sons, heirs of her rural wealth for ages,

have squandered it away from the hearths, that might have been blessed by home joys, and then the cry of the poor would never have entered there, nor would blood have ever stained the hands born in peacefulness and content to till the ground, which now lays waste. It is in fact the unhealthy spirit commencing with those who have no cause for such unrighteous pride and descending to the very lowest; the spirit, not of proper emulation, not of mental aggrandizement, but of worldly desire to obtain a position, to which they have no right, and which, save through intellect, genius or industry and conduct, ought only properly to be acquired, that has induced many who have means sufficient, and more than sufficient for all the wants and even conveniences of life, to aspire to a situation, which they can never adorn, and while ten are struggling to mount this ladder scarce one ever arrives safely at the summit, while the remainder, if they reach the highest step, often fall to rise no more.



But I have left my happy rural party in the full enjoyment of their harvest home, where I have brought together the squire and his tenant, the tenant and his men, the pastor and the school-master, the children of the lord of the land and those of the tiller of the field side by side in happy communion, to show that such things may be, such things were, though such things rarely are now. I have brought them together I say from the luxurious halls of Mr. Passmore, and from the woodbine-clad cottage of George Radstock to speak for themselves. Who can read the workings of those hearts, old and young, rich and poor, there assembled? Even could such things be, even were their hearts laid bare to the beholder, the task then would be one of difficulty, to form for each who had not then attained the meridian of man's life a fair estimate of their future career.

At the head of the board sat farmer Winter, let us look at him; his florid countenance is bright with joviality and contentment, and yet there

lurks about his mouth a curl of pride, as much as to say, I am master here ; I probably wrong him, however, it might only be the just pride that his landlord had condescended to sit at his table, and take part in the festivities so pleasingly arranged on this occasion of thankfulness to God for an abundant harvest, and the still more pardonable pride of seeing assembled around him so many happy faces, whose homes were at least made homes of comfort and contentment by the earnings of honest labour which he supplied. I will do him the justice to believe that at the moment he had no other feeling but that of honest pleasure, and would not have desired to change his position to be owner of Lindford Hall. He had but little of that boarding school tuition such as had been granted to his sisters, and their thoughts were widely different. On his right sat Mr. Passmore, an aged man, and a thorough gentleman of the old school. I have, however, already endeavoured slightly to describe his character ; to

read his thoughts on this occasion, and so placed, would have been difficult ; by all he would have been pronounced a high bred gentleman, whether in the presence of his sovereign or the humblest tiller of the land ; but as he sat there watching the rustic assembly, and little heeding the good cheer before him, something might be gained by narrowly watching him ; he evidently felt simply nothing more or less, than that the sight of so many young folks and old men cheerfully congregated together was a pleasing one ; not a thought entered his head as to whether by his presence he was doing honor to those around him, or anything in the slightest degree derogatory to his own position in life, by supping at the same board with farmer Winter and Mick Coddington, however unnecessary his asking them to his. He knew his position far too well for one moment to allow any such idea to enter his head ; he solely felt the scene was a happy one, and as it had been his custom and the custom

of his father before him to meet his tenants and the labourers on his estate, so according to custom he did the same, and had he been asked to do a kindness to any one present it is possible he might have done it ; yet be it known he looked on farmer Winter simply as farmer Winter his tenant, and Mick Coddington simply as Mick Coddington a hard-working, day labourer, and it was not because the one was a farmer or the other a labourer that he would ever have had the slightest reluctance, if necessity or chance required him to meet them at any time ; but he knew his own position, and he knew theirs, and had the one presumed on his courtesy, and taken an improper liberty, or the other forget his place, that instant the whole scene would have changed.

And it is this want of tact, or assumption by many which has caused so much discomfort between landlord and tenant, particularly on the part of the landlords ; however, I speak of some years back, for now all are jumbled together, that

they did not live more constantly on their estates, and inquire, personally and practically, into the cares and joys of those who, as possessors of abundance, it was their duty to watch over almost as a family. And on the part of the farmer, who not contented with wealth obtained by industry and easy rentals, must needs vie with those to whose position mere increase of means gave them no just title to vie with their landlords, by bringing up their children to be what the world calls ladies and gentlemen.

When farmer Winter rose with a foaming mug of bright October, and proposed the health of their honored and respected landlord, Mr. Passmore, not a man at the table but did the same, and few, if any, were there who did not feel, or who had not cause to feel, the sentiments he expressed. But the old squire rose not from his seat, he simply said,

“ I am glad, my friends, to see you here, happily assembled, as I have seen many of

your fathers before you when a lad myself, I thank you for drinking my health, and I trust you will all continue to do your duty, and go regularly to church."

He probably meant, however, and felt as much and more, than do nine tenths of those who talk for hours about fattening oxen, and half stifling pigs for cattle shows, which, after all, as far as I can judge, are only of use to the tallow chandlers ; and the fact of his sitting down while others stood, was as little thought of as those would think who were in the presence of their Queen when she did the same. But the man is now as good as his master, and we are fast casting away the freedom which England gloried in to the despotic will of fashion, which in our better natures we all hate, if the word hate can ever rest in its true sense in an Englishman's heart, which I much doubt. John Bull is a tolerably good fighter, but I fancy he cannot hate even a Frenchman.

Look at those two smiling faces who sit below

the salt, yet before a truly regal pudding, as they had desired. They are young Frederick Passmore and his selected queen, Mick Coddington's daughter ; he is all laughter and fun, she all happiness and amusement ; now her young companion fills her plate with smoking pudding, now tells her many boyish tales of his feats on the water and at cricket at Eton, now of the leaps he took on his pony, Forester, in the chase. How her bright blue eyes glisten in delight ! and yet that girl, young, simple, and then little educated, had mind, refinement, knowledge, all granted to her—the brightest gifts of nature—which told her plainly as she read her A. B. C. that she was the child of a labourer, sitting side by side, in happy ; joyous communion, with the son of a man rich in this world's wealth, high in position, made tenfold higher in her young imagination even by the coat he wore, yet her enlightened mind permitted her to enjoy all this, and yet only to enjoy it as that of a passing and favored mo-

ment, retiring the next with thoughts truly resting in fond and childish remembrance of him who had been so kind, yet accepting that kindness received from the heir of Lindford as the labourer's daughter ; while Frederick, a few years her senior, yet with a young mind as enlightened as her own by nature, and far more so, from early education, felt real boyish delight in the presence of his rustic little queen, and was already sensible of how valuable the child might become to those around her were her education fairly attended to ; or at least passing fancies ran through his mind, which soon led to such result ; but never for one moment, did he feel himself more out of place by her side than had he been sitting by the first lady in the land, simply that high breeding was innately centered in him, both from birth, education, mind and tastes. The rustic roughness around him was too natural to be offensive, and the pretension of the Miss Win-



ters and their set was too offensive to rest one moment on his thoughts, save that he despised it.

While these two young beings, so different in station, yet so formed by nature to imbibe feelings of affection, were thus in the full enjoyment of the passing hour, without one thought save those of innocence and happiness being allowed to enter their hearts or mar their satisfaction, violent and passing pangs of bitter feeling, envy and jealousy were fully alive in those of their neighbours. The thoughts of Miss Winter the elder, although honored by the presence of the much respected rector of Lindford, who sat by her side, and with calm and unaffected kindness spoke of the pleasures of the season, and the christian feelings which ought to find place in the minds of all thus assembled in health and peace to partake of abundance and hospitality, were wandering far away to others ; with no complacent smile did she look on the guests of her brother ; little

cared she for any who sat around that board ; such meetings were not to her taste, indeed they rather tended to her disgust ; few, if any, could estimate her finery, while none gave one passing thought to her airs and graces ; had it been a ball or a merry meeting wherein she could have met those to whom, if she did not consider them her equals, at least she might have shown her affectation, the case would have been widely different ; but her mind was of too low a grade to estimate rightly so rural and happy a gathering, and too ill directed, by the force of an unwise education, to make her kindly enter into its merits. True the squire sat by the side of her brother, she could, therefore, truthfully tell her school-fellows he had accepted their offered hospitality and had eaten at the same table. With this, however, came another truth—every labourer on the farm had done so likewise.

But let me forget her for a moment, and turn to her sister, who if she had

more heart, and truly that was little enough, had far more ambition, perhaps I should more correctly name it foresight. She appeared to be all animation, she sat directly opposite the two young creatures I have alluded to, viz : Frederick and the little Mary, and while she apparently listened to every word addressed to her by her rejected lover, who sat on the one side, as also by the young George Radstock on the other, her eye was rarely absent or her ears closed to every syllable they uttered ; and young as she was herself she had already formed tolerably correct ideas of the future ; utterly did she despise the tender expressions which from time to time fell from the lips of him who for years had believed himself born solely to secure her happiness, and equally did she reject, though by no means so directly, the offers of service tendered to her by George ; sufficient that he was useful to her, as useful as a lap dog, the other man she utterly despised, though it would be difficult to have assigned any just cause, save that she had learnt the

worldly difference which exists in ill directed minds between the son of a farmer, who rents two hundred acres, and the daughter of another who rents four, to say nothing of her brother's freehold ; she never dreamed of the peace and happiness which might be hers, did she ally herself with an honest man, living on and improving lands immediately connected with those of her brother.

That such thoughts should not find place in the mind of a girl who has learnt to read novels and her notes on the piano, without powers of mind to bring education to usefulness is not surprising. On the other hand, had the natural tastes of a refined mind, gifted by nature, caused her to rebel against those of her own station the case would have been widely different, but then, while she rejected their advances, the very mode of her doing so would have prevented her being annoyed for the future, without leaving one unkind feeling on the heart of the rejected ; for be it in whatever station it may, mind will find

its proper place and be respected. Miss Gelica's sole object was to obtain her own aggrandizement, she cared not at whose expense ; and not to obtain that would be the cause, as far as within the powers of her nature lay, to prevent it in all others. Therefore while she thought not of those around her, she thought much of those opposite to her, and from time to time turned her eyes towards the spot where, beside her father, sat the little lady of Lindford Hall, in the most entire childish enjoyment of the passing scene around her.

But the evening wanes apace, the dark blue vault of heaven is already o'er spangled with multitudes of bright autumnal stars, already has many a mother carried her pleasure tired children home to their humble cots ; the little Mary, among the rest, was called on to depart, and as she did so Frederick took her hand and gently lifting her from the rustic form on which they had sat, with all the easy good breeding which nature instils into the heart of such a lad, he

bade her a sweet good night, telling her not to forget to come often to the Hall and see her playmates ; and having done this, with a nod to the Miss Winters, and a friendly greeting to farmer Winter, he joined his father and sister, who were soon far on their road to Lindford Hall, while the remaining guests, principally composed of farmers and labourers—for the Miss Winters retired on the leaving of their aristocratic guests—drew closer together, lit their pipes, and with song and merriment sat far into the hours of morning.

## CHAPTER X.

“The pillow is a silent Sibyl—despise not its oracles.”

IN the pleasant little sleeping apartment allotted to the sisters, which I have already named, and which had been made, if not comparatively comfortable, in their estimation supremely elegant, we find them after the fatigues and excitement consequent on the part they had taken, as regarded the festivities of the harvest. I cannot, to speak truly, however, explain from what source the severe fatigue of which

they both complained arose ; certainly they had taken little menial part in the culinary preparations, neither had they given themselves any particular trouble in reference to the comfort of their guests, for not one of whom they cared a jot. I was about to say excitement of the mind was the true cause of their fatigue, but there again I should be at fault ; with much sorrow, then I must confess, that that species of excitement, in simple words termed jealousy and envy, had much to do with it, not however, understand me, the jealousy adduced by the withering pang of feeling caused by being neglected or overlooked, by the one the heart dotes on ; for such jealousy may, nay, does enter the highest mind and most noble of hearts, in spite of all that man can do to reject it ; neither was it the envy of seeing another enjoy that society, which you know would be as welcome to the object you are separated from as to yourself ; but the envy and jealousy of a misplaced pride, arising from an ill-



directed mind and an ill-formed education. But I will let our fair friends speak for themselves ; I should like to know what are their opinions of the happy group, so recently assembled in the barn, still more curious am I to hear their comments on the beings with whom they have so recently broken bread ; doubtless many will already say, I have sufficiently prepared the theatre, so now let the actors perform.

In an easy chair, half undressed, with a shawl thrown across her shoulders, and well-formed slippered feet, a beauty with which nature had favored her, sat Gelica ; as usual, a book was in her hand, for the events of the day had prevented her finishing a novel, the interesting plot of which had greatly excited her ; her face was pale, pale, I was about to say, as the whitest marble, but the wildest stretch of a poet's fancy could scarcely have made it that ; in fact, the candle which stood on the small table beside her, was somewhat

more of the right colour. There was, however, considerable character about the expression of her countenance, and one who reads in such books, would probably have said, that although she was reading, and felt interested in what she read, her thoughts were wandering at moments elsewhere.

Her sister had hurriedly disencumbered herself of her finery, evidently displeased that her flowers and flounces had been paraded to so little effect, and she had cast this finery on the chair beside her, while she was already comfortably composed beneath the bed-clothes, not however with any intention to sleep, but solely for the purpose of placing herself in an agreeable position to talk over all that had passed ; in fact, to have the pleasure of easing herself of a load of venom previous to laying her head on her pillow to rest, which head be it observed, was bedecked in a very becoming night-cap, not exactly bordered with Brussels

lace, nevertheless displaying very considerable taste.

I may be accused of impropriety in thus peeping into the sleeping apartment of two young girls after midnight; but I write of facts, not fiction, and I cannot allow any false pride to deter me from naming that which I actually saw, and what I did, left no pleasing impressions on my mind. Becoming as was her night-cap, she became it not, indeed, I fancied she looked far better in the barn, with her flowing locks, than in simple cambric, notwithstanding the lace frill, and I was by no means pleased to see a shoe here and a stocking there, and a silk dress thrown over the chair, all of which want of care and neatness is quite unbecoming to girls in her station, and I knew that the slave, well-termed maid-of-all-work, would have double duty on the morrow, as she had had the day previous, all for the amount of five pounds per annum, or less, simply that

the Miss Winters were determined to forget they were honest farmers' daughters.

Having placed herself in the most comfortable position possible, Miss Winter raised herself in bed, and thus accosted the sharer of her apartment.

"For Heaven's sake, Gelly, do put away your everlasting novels, and tell me what you think of my brother's gathering—did you ever see so motley an assembly of rustics—so stupid a man as the old squire, or so impudent a one as the young boy, his son? as for the young lady, she is little better than a simpleton, with her simpers and her smiles; but then she is only a child, as yet tied to the apron string of that stupid methodist, Miss Handly, so what can one expect."

On being thus accosted, the sister did as she was bid, laid down the book she was reading, stretched out her feet, yawned, and said—

"Well, how often have I begged you not to call me by that vulgar name Gelly."

“Is that all you have to say—or are you so absorbed in the plot of your story—or so deep into some love affair, that you have not been listening to what I said. Well indeed, it is well for you to be listening all the evening to the sweet fooleries of your clodish admirer, or turning the brain of that boy, George Radstock, if you go on as you are going, you will find him drowned in one of our horse ponds, or enlisting for a soldier. I do verily believe the lad fancies you an angel, or a princess in disguise, for you have already bewitched him.”

“Well!” was again all the reply directed to this tirade.

“Why surely, Gelica, you do not mean to convince me, with all your pretended slyness, that you were not watching the events which passed around you.”

“No indeed, sister; there you speak truly; I was listening little to the fine speeches which you say were made to me, nor did I heed much poor George, who, I believe, regards me,

as I do my cat, who purrs on me when I feed him ; but I was, as you say, watching what was passing in the thoughts of others, and I came to this conclusion, that young Frederick already fancies himself in love with Mick Coddington, the labourer's daughter. That his old father thought it a terrible bore to leave his silken arm-chair and claret, to sit on a form, and be stifled with the smell of roast beef and pudding solely because he was lord and master of all the country round. I saw also that he cared not a jot for all that were there assembled, save his son and daughter, moreover, that were those who were feasting at our expense starving to-morrow, he would possibly desire his steward to inquire into their wants as a matter of form certainly, not as a matter of duty or feeling. He came here because it is an ancient custom, for the heads of the estate to sup with their tenants on such occasions ; an annual discomfort which he therefore

undergoes, instead of a pleasure which human nature ought to make joyous to him. But you and I may live, sister, to see a change in these matters, as well as many others ; but I am getting sleepy, so we will talk over the subject in the morning."

But Susan was not thus to be put off ; her curiosity was aroused by these unusual opinions being advanced by one generally so taciturn, and pushing back the frill of her night-cap, she stared with astonishment.

"Why really, Gelica, you do appear to have made the most of your time ; I fancied you were fully engaged with your admirers ; but I was mistaken, and as for the old squire, I care not a jot for his affectations, likings or dislikings, we are as good as he is any day ; and as for that young son of his, I am told he is about to go to Oxford ; and when he comes back, he will find his little queen sowing turnips in some of brother's fields, and then he

will pass her by, as he would a beggar in the street. But what do you think of old Miss Handly's impudence. I was standing under the walnut tree watching the dancing, when up she comes, and says—'Truly, Miss Winter, this is a beautiful rustic scene, how bright it is to see so many happy faces enjoying themselves thus merrily; and what beautiful weather for the harvest; I love to see a multitude assembled for one day's holiday and good cheer; people who have laboured for their bread, and will be called to labour again on the morrow; and those dear children, with what real, natural, unalloyed glee they enter into the spirit of the dance. Indeed, it is very kind of those who have the means, to gather around them their less fortunate neighbours, may God bless and make easy the life of all of them.' "

"She spoke well and kindly, Susan."

"Well and kindly—very easy for one to speak, one who is well fed, and well clothed,



and lives like a lady every day, with nothing to do but to keep Miss Augusta in order, and give advice to young Frederick, who seems to care very little for her lessons; lady indeed, she is only a governess."

"There you are wrong, she is a governess, nevertheless, she is a lady by birth, education, and manners; in all respects far superior to our teacher, Miss Snellings; this is very clear to me, though, doubtless, you think I cannot observe."

"Well, sister, you may be right, or you may be wrong; but that was not all she said, so don't go to sleep in your chair. 'I am glad to see your sister growing up such a nice-figured girl,' she added, 'though I fear her health is not over strong, for she carries not on her face the roses of the country; but you make up for that indeed, Miss Winter. I wonder, with so many smart young farmers about, and young men in the yeomanry corps, you have not already found a future husband; but there's

time yet, you have not left school, I believe ; but look sharp, or your sister will be beforehand with you, for I see Mr. Stow is very attentive ; I do not, however, think he is exactly suited to her—better that he had selected you, Miss Winter ;’ and having said these words, she hastened off to secure little Missy, who, heated with the dance, now required her care. Only think of her impudence, selecting a husband for me—better take old Farmer Higgs for herself. I will have none of your rustic, thick-legged clods, not I, if I never marry at all.”

“I think you are rather hard on Miss Handly ; but I must now go to bed, or the sun will rise ere we are asleep ; and I must be off to Lindford in the morning to change my book, unless George comes up to Ashton, if so, doubtless, he will run for me.”

“Ah ! no fear of that, he is sure to be here looking up at your window long before you get up ; really if that boy is not soon sent to the

plough, or to some good trade, I expect, when he grows older, you will elope with him, or having formed his mind, according to your imagination, you will set him up as a hero of romance, and become yourself the heroine."

At this moment the party in the barn having imbibed sufficient of strong ale to float a man of war, and smoked sufficient tobacco to make a scarcity of the article in Lindford till the next importation, had separated, and Mr. Winter having as far as he was able, seen that all was safe about the premises, for, generally speaking, a moderate man, the occasion was sufficient cause for a little debauch, ascended the stairs somewhat unsteadily, and seeing a light through the crevice of the door, called out to his sisters:—

"What not in bed yet, what are you at, girls, it is already daylight, turn in lasses, turn in."

The sisters did as their brother requested, and their own fatigues suggested.

Notwithstanding all their apparent frivolity, however, they were by no means devoid of natural affection, a virtue which probably shows itself in brighter colours in the middling classes of society than all others—and having offered up thanksgivings to Him who is the last to forsake, the fallen sinner, and the first to pardon our guilt, though we rebel every instant against his goodness—they joined their lips in sisterly love, and were soon side by side, in a deep and refreshing sleep. Let us leave them to their calm repose, with the belief, as with the hope, that two beings yet in the early stage of life's career, may never have greater cause than they had to break on the calm repose of night. The harvest moon shines brightly o'er the rich vales of Lindford ; it will soon give place to the glorious sun of summer ; ere that rises let me cross the path to Lindford Hall, and see that all are resting there, I will also peep into the humble abodes of Radstock and Mick Coddington by the way. There are no more charming pictures in

nature than that of beholding the poor man's home, when the dead hour of night has cast its shadow on the labours of the day, and while the young and innocent are hushed in sleep, the old are resting for the coming labours of the morrow.

In Radstock's cottage all is silent, but one among the number who finds shelter beneath that roof, one among the assembled beings who occupy the only two bedrooms of their limited abode slumbers not, either mentally or physically; that one is George Radstock, as yet so young in years, and yet so deep in thought; he lay restless, and tossing from side to side, no rest had he; the demon of boyish jealousy had already entered his young heart, or if not exactly jealousy, or such jealousy as in after years tortures the heart of most of us, whether the cause be supposed neglect from her on whom the heart dotes, unsatisfied ambition, or any other cause, trifling or great, again and again did his young thoughts rush wildly over the occurrences of the last

twelve hours ; the image of Angelica Winter was ever before him, now dancing with another, now kindly requiring his presence by her side, now sending him on some frivolous errand, as if he were her attendant ; all these thoughts were his, and though he had little education, and perhaps less mind, he had that which in many instances induces man to appear before his fellow men as having both, he had tact and cunning, and a thirst after a higher position than that to which he was born ; but this tact, and this cunning, strengthening with his age, was far more likely to urge him to gain his ends without thought of the means, rather than by a steady course of industry, and honest teaching attain to the position he aspired. Exhausted nature in the long run, however, is so organized as even to overpower thought, and I will leave him to such repose as will enable him to be up again with the lark, and as Susan Winter justly surmised on his road to Ashton farm. For when woman leads the way easy the path to him who desires to follow.

Not a sound is heard in Mick Coddington's humble cot, but the soft breathings of quiet and innocent sleep, and among those who there rest in peace, not one bears the semblance of God's blessed rest permitted to us, so pleasingly marked on her sweet and youthful face as does that of little Mary, she sleeps sound as the calm of death, not a line of life's cares troubles that innocent face, her eyelids firmly closed, spread the long eyelash on her pale and intellectual countenance, the mouth alone speaks ; even in sleep, a smile still rests there, the last happy smile of joy in remembrance of the pleasures of the day past. May God watch over thee sweet child ! nature has implanted in thy heart, though humble is thy birth, a mind as refined, sentiments as noble, with truth as firm, and love as fond as ever man may desire to share, though his lot be cast in the lap of fortune, and his blood flow in an uninterrupted line from kings ; "sleep on, I say, and may

angels watch over thy young pillow, and may each morning of life's journey, break for thee in happiness !”

I now approach the mansion of Lindford Hall ; the massive pile is darkly shadowed by noble trees, on which the harvest moon threw strong lines of light alike over park and terrace, yet not a sound is there, even the blood-hound in the court is hushed in sleep ; and yet beneath that roof, there rest in life some five and twenty souls ; with many indeed, most of them I have little concern. Previous to parting for the night, however, after their arrival at the hall, the merry-making at Ashton farm had been fully discussed by the children, or I should rather say the young people in the presence of Miss Handly—for the squire had betaken himself to his own apartments, and doubtless, no sooner there than he had forgotten the whole proceedings—Not so Frederick, a boy who had been some years at Eton, and who, moreover, was possessed of



talent and observation far beyond his years, and a girl brought up by such a woman as Miss Handly, and in the constant habit of mixing with persons of the highest ranks in society, and all older than themselves, were not likely to allow their day's occurrences to pass without comment.

“ Well,” said young Freddy, throwing himself on a beautiful sofa. “ I really think a harvest home, is very gay and jolly, moreover, it is great fun ; when I have farms of my own, I shall let them on the express condition that all my farmers have such at homes, and invite me to every one of them. I shall, however, not sit and look on as dear daddy did, as if he was bored to death by the whole proceedings, and feared being obliged to drink a gallon of ale, but I shall crave the right of taking the chair, and saying a word or two to both old and young there assembled.”

“ And you will, of course, enter into the lease that each of your farmers shall have as sweet

little daughters as that dear little Mary. Aye, Freddy," said his sister Augusta laughing merrily.

"Why, as to that, I really think I must, but you say nothing but the truth; she really is a very dear little girl, and as well behaved and sensible, as it is possible to find a child of her age. Indeed, Miss Handly, I wish you would have her up to the hall, and give her the benefit of your tuition; do, that is a dear old girl—a term of affection he was in the habit of using—you will find her an apt and worthy scholar, or I am much mistaken."

"Why, my dear Frederick," said the warm hearted governess, "I would do anything that you and my dear child here might desire, but it is a matter which requires some consideration; you must recollect she is simply a labourer's daughter, born to labour for her bread; I admit she is a dear child, yet, shall we not be doing her more harm than good, shall we not, in the end, give her more cause for

sorrow than happiness, if we take her for a time from her own position, only to give her all the tastes and habits of one to which she can never aspire, to cast her back among those which henceforth would only become distasteful to her."

"You speak kindly and truly, as you ever do, my dear friend," said Frederick, throwing his arms around her, yet I have often heard you declare, that the nobility of the mind is the highest gift which God has granted to man or woman, and I doubt me much, if you will not find that nature has added more refinement of nature, and given more good sense to this young girl, labourer's daughter though she be, than you will find in thousands, who are daily clothed in silk attire, and fare sumptuously; indeed I do not fear that education and example, such as you and my dear sister would bestow on her, would have any other effect, than that of causing her to bless you for that kindness which may place her in a station for

which nature has fitted her, more exalted than that she now holds."

"Well, dear Freddy, we shall see, we shall see, the little girl shall come up here in school hours; I think with you, she is not one who will presume on such kindness."

"No, indeed she will not, though, recollect, she is one in a thousand, a pearl among swine, or I should not have advanced such opinions."

"Well, you are a strange boy, and a forward one, to offer them, but we will test their truth."

"Do so, and you will not regret it, and when I return from Oxford, I shall find my hedge-rose grafted on a stem of your selection, and already vying with the most choice exotics. But recollect, this is not, cannot be the case, save those powers evince themselves, which are so prominent in this young girl, though were she now told she possessed them, she would in vain endeavour to understand your meaning, but let education once touch the

roots of her mind and heart, and see how gloriously they will expand and then association with those who are gentle and kind, and refined in taste and feelings, such as you are, dear ones will do the rest."

"Why, really Freddy," said his young sister, "to hear you talk, one would suppose you were a man, and not an Eton boy, but I really shall be glad to have the little Mary as a playmate, and companion in my studies, for it is dull enough when you are away, to be so lonely as we are here, there are so few of my own age in this neighbourhood with whom I can ever associate, and was it not for my darling second mother, I should mope away the whole day long when the weather is bad, and papa, so seldom rides, now, that even my pony sometimes mopes for want of exercise.

"You will find her all you wish, though, take care she does not surpass you in learning, clever as you are, my pet. How different are those Miss Winters! did you watch them

this evening. Schooling, though they have had, what schooling is it, simply an education which teaches dissatisfaction of their own position, and not the means to raise themselves to another. As for the eldest, she is eaten up with ridiculous pride, and the love of fine dress; aping her superiors, and rude to her inferiors, and the younger, who has some character, which in proper hands might have been advantageously directed; from all I learn, she passes her whole time in reading novels, and if I mistake not, she is leading Radstock's son to no good, for the lad is already half bewitched, and will soon be totally unfit to follow those pursuits to which his honest father, and elder brother so meritoriously labour. And Mr. Winter, my father terms him a good tenant, and an honest yeoman; he may be both, for he has some first-rate land, on very easy terms, as the steward informs me, which land he does little to improve, and the possession of means covers a multitude of sins, therefore he has little diffi-

culty in being honest. I wish he had the same facility in being wise, for he is fast allowing the foolish ideas and misplaced sentiments of his silly sisters to thrust from his heart that old-fashioned English heartiness, which is fast decaying; but it is getting late, so good night, good night, both of you."

I may be accused of putting sentiments into the heart, and words into the mouth of a youth which could not have found place there, but be it recollected that a well educated boy of fifteen years of age, who has a mind and who is not blind to the occurrences, which are daily passing around him, is by no means incapable of judging character; and Frederick Passmore only saw that which all others would have seen, who had one thought above the common order. But I must leave the inmates of the hall in peace and rest, for there are in that old mansion, hearts as warm, feelings as generous, minds as bright and as noble, as I shall hereafter show, as might be found far and wide in the merry lands of England.

## CHAPTER XI.

The poor man who patiently endures his want, is rich enough.

THE situation of the rural labouring class, that is the whole class of agricultural poor, has long attracted the commiseration of the country ; by none, however, is their situation more justly estimated than by those who constantly are brought in contact with them, and I can honestly assert, that when he who is strictly termed an agricultural labourer, does suffer from actual poverty, great indeed must be



those sufferings ; though I have already expressed my belief, a belief which I fancy few will gainsay that the misery of agricultural poverty is by no means commensurate with that of the artisan class. It must, however, be born in mind as regards the tiller of the ground or farm labourer, that with the exception of the harvest season when he may be enabled, by mowing or reaping, to add a few extra shillings to his hard earned gains, and thereby be enabled to pay the rental of his cottage, even in the most favourable period his gains rarely amount to more than the sum required to purchase the bare necessities of life ; he has no superfluities, no luxuries, seldom sufficiency ; and whenever the slightest reduction in these is caused, either by sickness or any other unforeseen circumstances which encroaches on those gains, no economy, however laudable, can supply the deficiency ; he has nothing to economise from. Should these means then be withdrawn by failing health or strength

his sole means of existence is forfeited ; and the term poverty is not a metaphor when applied to him as it often is when used with respect to many higher classes whom a change of circumstances only make poor by comparison to that which they previously possessed, debarring them solely from the idle frivolities of the world or the uncalled for luxuries in which they may have imprudently or too lavishly have indulged. The very deduction of sixpence per week to a day labourer, small as the sum appears, is a serious diminution of income. I do not mean to infer that when poverty comes to the mechanic, that it comes not more severely, but it comes not with such devastating effects as to the rural labourer ; the wages of the artisan are, generally speaking, far higher, particularly so if he be an able and well conducted man ; he then generally receives more than sufficient for the absolute means of existence ; and ought, and does sometimes, lay by a little for an evil day, which, if it be

caused by sickness or any other reason than from misconduct or drunkenness, enables him to keep his head above water, the black day is passed, and he labours onwards. A farmer, however, generally employs a certain number of hands, for the work cannot stand, seed must be sown, ground manured and ploughed, corn cut, and hay mowed, and if one man is unable to attend to these matters, another must take his place, a place he finds some difficulty in regaining; and he has little else to do if he cannot get work than to starve, while the lark sings as gaily, the sun shines as brightly, and the flowers bloom as freshly all around him.

Oh! how sad, how passing sad, is the heart of man, who looks on nature adorned with its brightest garb, and yet sees around him children on whom his heart fondly dotes, in penury; who longs to labour, yet labour is not to be had. It is at such times as these that the hearts of landlords, if they have the power, should induce them to cast away some idle and

expensive pleasure, and learn that the land they call their own is only land in trust, for a passing season. I leave it to the calculations and theories of economists to explain the principles upon which the produce arising from land is distributed between the owner and the labourer ; I do not favour the supposition that in general the situation of the agricultural labourer is susceptible, under ordinary circumstances, of great improvement ; equally am I told that no facts can be found at other periods, or in other countries to cause us to doubt the correctness of such reasoning. I for one know little of the position of the agricultural labourer of other countries, either in these or in the times when Mr. Passmore's grandfather lived at Lindford Hall, but of this I am certain that there was not a poor man, that is a pauper, on his estate, and I doubt if there be one now, for this simple reason—that landlords in former days lived more on their own property, and the produce of that property, and although they

required, and had abundant conveniences, they looked for less expensive luxuries. The meat and poultry daily supplied to their tables was the produce of their own home farms, in fact almost all the articles consumed in a large establishment, nine months during the year, were the produce of the estate ; and hands were consequently required for all these matters. Lindford Hall offers the same picture in the present day, solely that the young proprietor of the estate has the proper feeling of a christian and an Englishman, to make proper use of the abundance which hereditary chance has given him, and although like other men, he may visit the land of the stranger, he feels it not less a duty than a pleasure to support the people, born, bred, and nurtured on his large possessions, whose existence he feels it imperative on him to look after as much as his rental or the broad acres which supply that rental.

The period after the commencement of the last century for eighty or ninety years, was proba-

bly that in which the working community had the greatest cause for satisfaction, and it may be a just interim to say that the great and unavoidable rise in the poor rates seems to present the best indication for fixing the period at which, during the last century, the welfare of the agricultural labourers began to decline. Nevertheless I am bold enough to assert that if the position of the agricultural labourer is worse in the present day than it ever was, which I can scarcely doubt, the owners of the land are much to blame, for such evil effects on the comforts of their more humble fellow men. Well can I commiserate the fate of him, who, struggling honestly against misfortune, falls at last ; truly can I ever feel for him whose mercantile affairs, by unforeseen or unlooked for cause, become embarrassed ; my heart bleeds not the less for that man, who, struggling against the cares of poverty, notwithstanding all his endeavours of economy, finds himself involved in difficulties, without one helping hand to relieve

him. Yet, little pity have I for him, who, born to this world's wealth, and from his very childhood accustomed to look far and wide on the rich lands of his native country, of which he claims a large share, feels not that such bountiful gifts are only given him by a bountiful Providence ; and in proportion to his charge, will be rewarded for not neglecting those who would look to him in gratitude and love, yet not contented with his envied lot, scatters thousands, and tens of thousands, to the winds in idle, selfish pleasures, and thousands more in the land of the stranger ; while those on the estate which calls him master—indeed, that which his forefathers may have won on the field of glory or by the power of mind, are existing in misery, nay want and poverty, without the employment which, to them, is the bread of life. I may be deemed a theorist ; yet I must repeat that the earth yields sufficient for us all, in our respective stations. Is there not proof of that which I

here assert in the little poverty we find on a well regulated estate, where the noble or the wealthy owner is in constant residence. Is there any greater proof than the present misery of Ireland, where half the estates have scarcely ever been watched over by their possessors. Indeed it is almost to be regretted that the freedom we all so truly desire, did not permit the passing of a law, that no man should possess pluralities in landed estates, as well as pluralities in livings, an only recently reformed privilege, which, when permitted, came well nigh to the barbarism of despotic ages.

Previous to the year 1783, and for some years subsequently, a few labourers, in many counties, were owners of cottages and gardens on leases, and they afforded the most favourable specimen of the state of comfort that a labourer might possibly attain.

The whole, or almost the whole, of this happy class have disappeared from the face of the earth, and their leases have rarely been



renewed; this is another and a trying evil to the better class of labourers, for most of them were compelled to sell their property before the expiration of their tenancy. It is true, all this may, in some measure, be caused by taxation, as well as by extravagant and absentee landlords; and whom have we to blame for this heavy weight of internal expenditure but those who hurried us into a long and gloriously expensive war. The war which terminated in 1783, disastrous and costly as it was, burdened the proud, rich lands of England with a load of taxation, which all the gold of California would scarcely repay, and that which closed in 1815 has clearly not diminished the weight.

When we look back to what we were, and know what we are, I am almost inclined to agree with Punch, that it is almost to be deplored that the Emperor Napoleon the First was not permitted to cut the throats of all the Dons of the Spanish Peninsular without grant-

ing them that aid, for which we have received little but ingratitude, to say nothing of placing a king on the throne of France, who, having died unloved and unregretted, made way for his descendents, who proved themselves scarcely more fit to rule over a great nation than was he. And thus the day has arrived, when we see Napoleon\* the Second, President, first magistrate, Emperor, or whatever he may become, for it is difficult to say what the times may bring forth, in precisely the same position which quiet descent would have permitted to him, without all the outlay of English gold, and the spilling of English blood, and the misery of English people—a people who have sufficiently proved to the world their inestimable qualities, and firm reliance in their God, their sovereign, and their country.

Let every man, instead of crossing the Alps, or running over every place in Europe,

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\* The above was written three years since.

pass a few months of a few short summers in visiting the lovely rural districts of his native land. There are spots in England that will bear comparison with the proudest scenes of France and Italy and as much of poetic beauty as any portion of the overrated splendours of the continent; tourists will find peaceful cottages covered with blooming honeysuckle, in which poverty may reign, while peace and honest purpose abides beneath the same roof; they will see the labourer daily go forth to the labours allotted to him, and for which he gains a pittance barely sufficient to maintain life; but rarely find a thought to emanate from the breast of such men, save it be of duty to the crown, and love for their homes and family; and if the hour came, such men would not be found wanting to prove these sentiments.

The wanderer at home will find the rural daughters of England, if he will speak truly, as fair, and far more so, than all the vaunted bright-eyed daughters of the south, or the snubbed-nosed angels of the north, and he will judge

more fairly than the world are wont to judge of what really is the rural labourer's state, and how little it requires of those who have the power to make it all that can be wished.

The general complaints made against the labourer are his carelessness and want of energy. In some slight degree, these complaints are founded in truth; yet what has he to induce him to cast away this apparent sloth. The very defects complained of arise principally from the conviction that the limits are contracted within which, during the period of his existence, he is destined to move, and by his mind being rendered torpid by dependance on every occasion on the commands and directions of those, whom, if he has any mind himself, he frequently finds, in every sense, to be his inferior. He knows that the utmost exertion of his abilities, mechanical or agricultural—and strength of body, makes little difference in his reward—no real or delusive prospect of wealth or ease in later days for himself or family is opened to his hopes—

nothing is left to his ingenuity or invention, and he is entirely excluded, by his pauper station, from any familiar intercourse with the means of acquiring knowledge, or enlarging his views. And such causes will operate equally unfavourably on any class of mankind, who are exposed to similar disadvantages, and, therefore, no peculiar blame attaches to the agricultural labourer.

The parochial and other schools, however, have of late years offered some education to the children of the labouring class, which is so far advantageous, that as it enables them to read, many hours of the long winter's evenings, as on the Sabbath, are thus passed in useful recreations, which otherwise would be wasted in the ale-house. If this education, however, take hold of a mind already biassed by associations, which tend to unsettle the position of life in which he or she who enjoys it is born, it may have precisely the contrary effect to that which it was intended ; without the seed falls

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upon rich soil, and then the harvest cannot fail to be abundant.

The former was precisely the case with our acquaintance, George Radstock the younger ; the boy had an aptness for learning, but it was that aptness with which a parrot learns to speak ; in fact, he had quickness and cunning ; he, therefore, soon mastered what in village terms would be termed sufficient learning ; and this, combined with a manly figure for his age, and a readiness of language, caused him to be looked on as a clever lad, while many with double the real intellect, might be passed over and forgotten.

This apparent aptness on his part, in the first place, introduced him as a mere child to the notice of the Miss Winters ; they found he was a quick and ready messenger, and as he grew older, and had learned to read and write, he became more useful, till we find him an absolutely necessary appendage to their establish-

ment; moreover, his disposition was essentially idle; and while I say this, I may add, that there are few curses, to a rural, remote village, like the presence of an idle member of the little rustic family; doubly great is that evil if the idle member be ought of a favourite among the community. All wealth, all earthly blessings, are the fruit of labour; the man, therefore, who refuses to labour, has no right to expect anything but poverty and punishment; while no principle is more true, than if a man will not work, he shall not eat, and equally just is another principle, that if a man does work, he ought to eat plentifully—in fact, the man who produces food, ought to be a partaker of that food, and the husbandman surely deserves some portion of the fruits of his own exertions.

Every idle man, in whatever class of life we find him, is a most objectionable man to his fellow men. Idleness, indeed, should almost be treated as a crime; and those who will not

work deserve to want, for such men enjoy the privileges of life at the expense of the industrious.

I speak not of the man who desires to work, and who cannot obtain it, for deeply is his lot to be commiserated, I speak of those who will not work, and yet who are ever ready to obtain the fruits of other men's labour, while they themselves live in idleness and profligacy.

I am not forgetting, however, the principle to which I have already alluded in reference to the education of the labouring class ; the same principle may be applied in reference to labour generally, for different men must devote themselves to different kinds of toil, and doing their all in one department, exchange the surplus, of whatever description, for the surplus of another.

When I say that all men ought to labour, I by no means imply that all men ought to labour in the same way, or that all men can perform the same amount of labour, such a



doctrine would be absurd, men are differently constituted, and formed by nature to excel in different kinds of labour, as are their minds suited to different kinds of education, a subject which appears to be entirely lost sight of, as regards the labouring classes.

One man is specially adapted for the acquisition of knowledge of one description, and another for the acquisition of another description—some who are not prominent in making fresh discoveries are peculiarly so for applying the discoveries of others to useful and important purposes. Men differ infinitely, and their adaptations for labour are as wide as the poles. The division of labour, therefore, and the free exchange of the products of labour is perfectly right, it is natural, it is just, it is wise and consistent, it is in harmony with the will of God, and with the laws of the universe, it is, in fact, a universal and an infinite advantage, and every man should be encouraged to labour in that particular line, for which his nature is peculiarly adapted, but above all, it is manifest that

every one, according to his ability, should labour in some way, that every one may contribute to the best of his abilities and physical powers to the welfare and comfort of mankind, if he do not do this, he becomes a misery to himself, and a pest to his fellow men.

I have found it necessary to express these brief opinions, in order to show the evil effects to him, who having the power, will not assist in adding to the general blessings which Providence, in infinite bounty, has bestowed in the produce of the land on the human race, be it in whatsoever station of life the lot of man is cast ; however humble, however exalted, he has duties to perform, and if they be well and conscientiously performed, the benefit arising to the whole class by his exertions, who can do little, but does that little earnestly, virtuously, and well, is as great as the well-performed acts of him, who having much, much is expected ; the mite cast into the general purse of human charity is as acceptable in the

eyes of God, as he who gives largely of his riches ; but the moment a man seeks to obtain a position to which he is not entitled by mind or manifold works of advantage to his fellow men, that instant he becomes a pest to society ; and if he attempt, by physical force or by outward acts of rebellious nature, to instigate a mob to support him in such position, there is no power of the law too strong that should not be used against him.

I do not, for one moment, arrogate to myself, an opinion against which every feeling of my heart would rebel, that the voice of every man in a free country should not be listened to ; if an appeal be made to the legislature, in terms becoming the request, there is not in the length and breadth of this fair land an opinion that may not be of some value, though the mind which engenders it be ever so humble ; and I am as far from deriding or despising that which is inferred by the word chartism ; as in expressing my abhorrence of despot-

ism ; but chartism in the hands of men who really have minds to judge its effects fairly, and hearts capable to feel that advantage and come to aid the community at large by peaceably furthering, in every possible manner, the views they entertain, is a widely different feeling from that which is the chartism of an idle, dissolute, selfish mob, who, having nothing to lose, but everything to gain, care not for the misery their evil efforts entail on the nation at large, or the miseries their rebellious acts bring down on the heads of their own followers.

To such mobs there are leaders, composed of men too idle to work, too vicious to be honest, men utterly selfish, utterly devoid of all patriotic feeling, all love of their country, all love of home, all sense of right ; wild enthusiasts sent forth in utter rebellion against their fellow men, without one redeeming point to disconnect them from the unflinching revolutionist ; such have laid waste the


continent, and who would desire to steep this fair land in blood that they might revel in crime.

The rural districts are, however, happily little tainted with such absurd dreams, though here and there it may be the deluded lot of some unhappy man, carried away by strong passion, over which the mind has no control, or by the evil advice of others, yet if there be, as there have been, and will again, his end is sure, in England he must fall, and be despised.

## CHAPTER XIII.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
When every rood of ground maintained its man ;  
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,  
Just gave what life required, but gave no more,  
His best companion innocence and health,  
And his best riches ignorance and wealth.

GOLDSMITH.



THE glories of summer had passed—the wintry winds howled without, the flakes of snow fell thickly on the ground hardened by a long

frost. All the earth for a season was at rest, preparing, at God's appointed time, once more to bloom into life, and alike secure the beauties of nature and the bread of existence. Of out door work there was little to be done—happy for him whose steady career of labour during the sunny months of the year, together with frugality, had garnered for him some little store for a time of need. But in such season and during such periods of northern inclemency the good workman is not without employment. If the field be not fitting to receive the plough or the harrow—if the seed time be not at hand or delayed by the iron bound mantle of frost, there is the wheat of the last harvest to be thrashed out, cattle to be fed and cared for, hedge rows to be trimmed, and other rural occupations, which, though I joy in thy charms fair country, I am unable to detail. The good and faithful labourer is, therefore, even at such seasons, rarely unemployed. A farmer who knows his interests does not easily part with a

first-rate, steady, honest and sober servant, he employs him when the labour is light, full well aware of his worth when that labour is heavy. The knowledge of such being the case ought to incite, and does incite, the hard working, industrious man to a career of well doing, and I scarcely ever enter the humble cottage of a day labourer that I do not fancy that it depends, in a far greater measure, with him to make that home one of peace and happiness, at least such peace and happiness as any man can hope for here, than he is willing to believe. The mechanic or artist who works for his bread amidst the heated atmosphere of the city, has decidedly not the same advantages as has the upright, hard working rural labourer; the charms of the artisan—the rise or fall of the market all tend either to ameliorate or sadden his path in life, whereas nine out of ten in a good agricultural district, if they will but be true to themselves may secure comfort and freedom from the bitter trials of want; not, however,



if that district be destroyed by the selfish extravagance of the owners of the land, not if its smiling corn fields be laid waste by neglect—its splendid woodlands laid low by the axe — its tenants impoverished by exorbitant rentals to supply a lavish expenditure among strangers grasped from the golden vale, while an absentee to the land is wasting a rich inheritance of wealth, and a still richer one in the esteem and respect of those whom it is his duty to watch over. I never think of the present state of Ireland, I never take up a daily journal complaining of the miseries of that unhappy country, that I do not with bitter sorrow recollect—That God should have formed one of the gems of the earth—rich in every natural beauty—glorying in one of the finest agricultural races—teeming with minerals—overflowing in natural abundance, in fact a land of milk and honey— with a climate far surpassing that of England, and with a population by no means equal to the extent of its acres—and yet that that fair

land, containing some of the noblest and warmest of hearts—some of the most exalted minds—some of the fairest of fair women—some of the most splendid landscapes—some of the grandest mountains and richest plains in Europe or the world, should be made by man a wilderness of penury and want ; where murder and rebellion stalk abroad in the light of the midday sun, and idleness, wretchedness and misery now plunders the home of a neighbour, now seeks charity of the Saxon, whose friendship they desire to cast off.

True there are high-minded christian and generous landlords who live on the land they have inherited from their forefathers, who think little of themselves, but expend their rentals on the improvement of their estates, and in so doing secure the peace and comfort of their tenants.

Yet how long will such men as these be permitted to labour for those who will not aid themselves. There is not an Englishman who

is not severely taxed to pay for the inhabitants of land laid waste. There is scarcely an Englishman who has not given his mite to save the Irish from want—nay starvation, while thousands of rich acres are untilled, unsown; pity that our wealth should be thus squandered in order that hundreds may eat the bread of idleness for which others toil.

The recent revolutions, which for a season were acted throughout Europe, and from which God so mercifully saved us, has been a severe lesson, and perhaps not altogether an unsalutary one, as proving that among all good men true despotism is as much abhorred as republicanism. Freedom of civil and religious opinion—the liberty of the subject, to man in his proper station, are mighty blessings, nay actual rights; but despotism and misguided chartism are devils incarnate, let loose to uproot the whole system of constitutional government, order and peace, which makes our native land so blessed. I repeat the

recent somewhat practical follies, it is true, of misguided men on the continent of Europe have had their good effects on this little island, for they have caused horror and loathing in the hearts of all christians and well thinking men, and have taught those, who required the lesson, that an English rental well employed at home by the comfort of an English fire-side, where peace and happiness so generally reigns, is, after all, not to be exchanged for the miserable discomfort of most foreign hotels, or in the imaginary luxuries of a Parisian domicile. It may also serve as a warning to those who are not contented with the many blessings obtainable in Merrie England that they may seek in vain for them elsewhere.

Let me not be misunderstood, however ; all who can visit for a season the land of the stranger should do so, indeed it is, in a measure, consistent with man's education, that he should be acquainted, as far as may be practicable, with the language and habits of his

neighbours, though I deny the necessity of squandering the wealth of England on foreign shores. For him who really desires to economise, far better and cheaper places may be found amid the beautiful scenery of North Devon, Wales and Cornwall, then either at Boulogne, or any place which the wide length and breadth of France can boast of; and the little they may have to spend will still find its way into the common purse as benefitting their fellow countrymen. Indeed I know a gentleman of considerable property in a neighbouring county, who having expended a large sum, not on gambling or improper extravagance or vice, but from an honorable desire to improve his estate, and who was, moreover, given to hospitality, who, unfortunately, found at the expiration of a few years that he had accumulated a considerable amount of debts; he was a noble-hearted, high-minded and honest man, he neither went to live among foreigners or fled his country; he discharged

none of the labourers on his estate—he raised no rentals—he pressed no tenants through the means of agents, or to the enrichment of lawyers, but he reduced his own establishment, let his home for a few years, and had the honesty to say to his neighbours that he had involved himself, but that he intended to give up all selfish expenditure, while there was yet time, and liquidate his debts ; with such intent he retired to a more humble residence, within fifty miles of his own estate, over which he still watched; and he also joined his brother magistrates on their county duty almost as frequently as heretofore. What was the result? a few, whose opinions were worthless, might have accused him of parsimony ; the majority, however, judged him very differently, and when a few years subsequently he returned to his own home again, free from embarrassment, he did so with the respect and esteem of all worthy his friendship, having gained the love and good will of all his tenants, whom he deserted not

in the hour of his own necessities, and he now lives at a good old age, loved, respected, and enriched, a thorough Englishman and an honest gentleman.

But the snow falls fast without, and the cold wind whistles loudly, as around a blazing fire sat a happy and thankful circle, warm and cheerful, they knew few wants, for their simple wishes were easily supplied. Mick Coddington, an honest labourer, still found work on the farm of Winter, and his son, whose steadiness was already a theme of praise among the villagers, aided his father, while the little Mary—already the pet of Lindford Hall—is enjoying all the comforts of that luxurious mansion, as the companion of Miss Passmore and her governess.

“ ’Tis a wild night, boy,” said the elder Michael, “ but the fire burns brightly, methinks we shall have more frost. Well, God’s will be done, He knows best what is good for man, and we have much reason to thank Him

for His mercies. It may blow without but we are snug within, and if I had my little Mary on my knee I should ask for nothing more."

"But she is well taken care of up at the hall I doubt not," replied young Coddington, "I'm told the ould squire is greatly fond of her, and as for young Mr. Frederick, he declares there's not a girl in all the county who can ride a pony like she can, or learn her book either, when she has a mind to it, but she is mighty fond of playing with the dogs and cats. I heard Miss Handly tell her myself, that till such time as her lessons were over, she should not permit a dog to enter the school-room. But father you should see Miss Augusta and Mary, scampering across the park with two large deer hounds, and a terrier, at their ponys' heels, with old John, the coachman, puffing and blowing after them on the fat coach-horse."

"Well, heaven bless the good people, I hope they will not spoil the darling, and make her too proud to think of her old fond father, that's



all. But listen, boy, what a rough night, how it snows and blows. God help the poor."

"God help the poor, indeed," said the voice of Radstock, who now lifted the latch of the cottage door, and entered. "But the poor are few on this estate, or here and hereabouts, I am happy to say; and if they be, they may in a great measure thank themselves—for there is work, and work enough for a good steady labourer. But the idle are a curse to any district, and the man that can get work, and yet who will not work, must needs suffer. But you have a cheerful fire, neighbour, and I have crossed over for an hour's chat; so I'll just smoke a pipe with your leave, and talk with you a bit, it will ease my heart; for to tell you the truth, Mike, I am somewhat grieved about that boy George of mine. The elder one is a steady lad, but he is too old now to receive much benefit from schooling, yet he is an honest hard-working lad, who shares his earnings with us all, and is a blessing to his

parents. But the other boy, George, has been beside himself of late, I may say since the merry makings in the autumn, at farmer Winter's. His head is full of all manner of nonsense, work he will not, and as for his learning he is quick enough at that, far too quick, for when at home he is always reading some old newspaper, or book lent to him by those Winter girls, and nothing seems good enough for the lad; he passes his mornings in racing after these fine farmer's daughters, who ought to teach him better. And more is the pity, for he is a lad of rare cleverness, I take it, if he would be guided by his parents, but all this comes of mixing with his betters.

“No, no, neighbour, not entirely that neither, his betters, if they are his betters, they might teach him well. Recollect the lad is young, and it is but natural he should like the attention he receives from farmer Winter's family—but his follies will wear off—and you will still live to see him all your heart desires.

Look at our child Mary, up at the Hall. There she is petted and happy, from week to week, nevertheless, when she comes home, she is still the same little Mary to her parents, as to you, neighbour, though some would have it she is an altered being, and so she may be, for the better, though a father's heart is one sided; the old parson calls her his little pet, and the schoolmaster declares they have robbed him of his best scholar.

“ And they speak kindly and fairly, neighbour,” said Radstock, puffing out the smoke with rapid puffs, “ she is, indeed, changed towards none whom she has loved, or who loved her, or ever will she change. But there it is, Michael, she has a mind, which it pleases God to grant to some though humbly born, and she may live to gain a higher station, and associate with those whose superior education and natural tastes have made them in a worldly point of view above her; nevertheless, she will

calmly take the place, which nature has allotted to her, and appointed to them. But my poor boy has queer notions, wonderful notions and fancies, but little power to carry them out, I imagine; one day the lad declares he will go for a soldier, the next, he wont work for no man, not he.

“ ‘The land,’ says he, ‘is made to feed us all, and we must all be fed.’ Then he talks of the rights of the labouring classes; the overbearing of landlords; declaring all men are equal. Such sentiments as these, I fancy, neighbour, do not relate to our quiet village. where, as I have already said, there are few poor; for all who will work can find employment, and the aged and the sick are well cared for. There is, however, sometimes a little matter of pride in the steward, and farmer Winter, methinks, likes to be a gentleman in his way, riding his blood horses, and such like—but he pays his labourers fairly, and he

has ever a kind word for you and I Mick, so we have nothing to say.

“ May it be the will of God that the times change not with us ; we are well to do, and if I err not, when the young squire comes into the estate—and it will not be many years first—without he greatly alters, things will go still better. But the wind has gone down, and the stars are shining brightly,” he observed, as he pulled aside the little window curtain, adding, “ we shall have more frost, so good night neighbour, we shall meet ere many hours in the barn, think in the mean time about my poor boy.”

Alas ! they were doomed never to meet again in this world. As the honest elder Radstock was making his way homewards with some difficulty—for although the stars shone forth, the night was dark, and the sharp frost which had been succeeded by a partial thaw during the afternoon, had caused the rough pathway through the village to become a sheet of ice—his foot slipped, when crossing the stony

street, from under him, and being a heavy man, he fell with much force, his head coming in contact with a coping stone, and he lay insensible on the cold ground. It is possible that had he been conveyed home, and received proper attention, that he might have recovered, as, however, it was still early when he left his neighbour's cottage—though too late, and the weather too severe for any one to be abroad, save from dire necessity—he remained where he had fallen for several hours.

The inmates of his own home, however, at length became alarmed at his unusual absence, and proposed that his eldest son should seek him at his friend's. On arriving there, he found its worthy inmates preparing to go to rest; nevertheless, on his voice being heard he readily gained admittance.

"Coddington," said the lad, "is father with thee."

"Surely no, boy, he left us two hours since, saying he was going straight home.

“ You surprise me, he rarely goes elsewhere than to you, and this is not a night for rambling ; nevertheless, he has not been home, and mother is somewhat frightened.”

Knowing Radstock’s regular habits, Michael became alarmed, but on second thoughts, he added :—

“ Perhaps he is gone up to see the school-master, we have been having some talk to night about your brother George, and I perceived he was somewhat anxious to know if he attended school regularly. But wait a moment, lad, till I put on my coat, again, and get a lantern, for the night is fearfully dark, and I will go with thee, and see ; surely there is no reason to fear, lad, because thy honest father is an hour or two later than usual ; such a man as Radstock is not fond of remaining long from home, he is no drinker, no roisterer, take my word for it, I have known, and been his friend for fifty years since Easter last.”

“ It is for the very causes you name that I

am uneasy, on his account, and mother's also, Michael, because it is rare for father to be out after nightfall, particularly such a night as this."

"Well, well, do not fret," replied Mich, having now replaced his coat, and lit the lantern, "let us go and seek him."

With careful steps they followed the path taken by poor Radstock; they had not proceeded far when Radstock, the son, less able to discover objects before him than his companion, who carried the lantern, stumbled, and well nigh fell over a large mass which lay stretched across the roadway. But I need scarcely dwell on this sad event. To behold the clay-cold corpse of one with whom only a few hours since we have sat in cheerful converse; to know that it is the body of one we have loved through long years of undoubted and humble friendship, is a blow which goes home to the deepest recesses of a feeling heart.

To witness, I repeat, before you, under the



canopy of a wintry sky, the inanimate body of him who so recently sat by your side in all the animation of rude health—to behold those lips now cold in death, which seemed scarcely to have ceased uttering words of honest purport, and friendly kindness—to see before you the friend from whom you seem scarcely to have parted with the assurance of meeting on the morrow—to watch those hands stiff and cold, which not an hour since had been clasped warmly in your own—oh how terrible to the heart of man or woman is this—how doubly terrible then to him who claims that inanimate form as father. Such scenes as these, however, are of daily occurrence and far worse—and yet, who among us do more than express our condolence and horror in feeling words of sympathy, when we hear or read of them—who among us rises, on the morrow of that day which had caused such apparent outpourings of the heart in words of grief, one jot more thoughtful, save when it comes

home to his own door, and then how bitter, how overpowering the agony of loving hearts. And even then, do we take warning that such a fate may be ours—do we, though again and again, warned by such trials, think of them as just reproofs from the merciful hand of God. That we may watch and pray, for who knoweth that he may not be called next. Alas no, few even of the very best do more than sorrow for the dead, and leave the rest to time, not heaven, to soften, if not entirely heal the overwhelming blow.

Neither Coddington or Radstock were men to be appalled by death, simply in its physical horrors, though deep, perhaps far more deep is the feeling which exists in the cottagers' hearts, as regards the loss of one of their immediate relatives and friends, than it is among the higher classes, which may readily be accounted for, as they are rarely separated through life ; fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, from childhood to old age, labour on, and labour

together, for the benefit of one another. But as I have already said, the sight of a dead body had but slight effect as regards their feelings, in comparison with the fact of that dead body being all that remained of the father of the one and the friend of the other. Therefore, while the one went forward to break the sad intelligence to the now widow and orphans, the other remained by the clay-cold corpse till assistance could be obtained to remove it to its home.

I desire not, however, to dwell on scenes of human suffering and grief ; to Coddington had been allotted the painful task of breaking the unhappy intelligence to those, who, ere the sun had set. had gathered round a simple board of frugal fare, yet was it truly one where love, and peace, and contentment reigned.

In those days, village surgeons, or as they were generally termed apothecaries, were by no means men of the high education and skill, they are now. Still Mr. Foster did all that man could do to restore life to the inanimate

form of poor Radstock ; but, alas, had there been a chance at first, it was now all too late. His skull was severely fractured, and having laid so long on the frosty ground, his limbs were stiff and frozen.

The light of day had scarcely made clear the eastern wood-clad hills of Lindford, ere every living soul in that small village knew that one among their number—and that one universally esteemed—was taken from this world of care, and from their circle. And everywhere was heard surmises, as there ever will be in large as in small communities, of how, and when, and where, the fatal event had occurred. The answer was simple enough in its unvarnished truth—a man in all the vigour of life, though verging on old age, had left the cottage of a friend with words of kindness on his lips, and feelings of affection in his heart, to join his family in the nightly prayer they were wont to offer up to God for all his blessings, previous to retiring to rest. It had pleased that God to

‘call him to himself ; his skull was fractured by a fall—his limbs were frozen and benumbed by long exposure, during several hours on a bitter winter night—he died.

Such was the simple evidence given at a coroner’s inquest, who, with that common sense, for which such inquests are not always proverbial, pronounced it accidental death, instead of manslaughter or murder by some person or persons unknown—such things have been, will be again.

But another day has passed, as days will pass, whether men live or die—are in sorrow or joy, rich or poor. And not a single family in that rural village, who gathered round the hearth that night, that did not speak of George Radstock the elder, as of George Radstock the younger. For the death of the father, at once, caused a double interest in the fate of his namesake and second son. I much fear, however, I should find it a somewhat difficult task to myself, as well as a dull one to him who may

follow me through these pages, were I to attempt to peep into their simple abodes, and give to the world the many comments which passed from lip to lip among those, to most of whom the event had been one of horror and grief. The few alone looked on it as a matter of curiosity and excitement.

In any small and retired country village, however, every trifle, not in accordance with the usual routine, is a source of marvel ; if a well known favourite dog dies, it becomes a nine days' wonder. A carriage passes through the village with four post-horses, all eyes are at the windows. If a stranger with a decent coat and hat on be seen, all the women, old and young, in the place canvass his personal appearance or his business, if he belong not to the neighbourhood.

Much then must a case of awful and sudden death coming suddenly amongst them, strike terror, for a time, amid the limited circle.

To do farmer Winter justice, he grieved and

truly for the loss of a faithful, and honest, and hard-working labourer. And immediately offered some comforts to the widow, and the place vacated on the farm to the elder son.

With regard to the Miss Winters, they viewed the case in another light. True, they expressed open sorrow for the event; but, at the same time, dwelt on it rather in regard to the effect it could have on their favourite George, than with any true commiseration.

“He will now go for a soldier, mark me,” said Miss Winter.

“No he won’t,” replied her sister, “he will remain here for a time, and then stand for the county. You know his sentiments of late—all men are equal—every one over paid for doing nothing, save himself—He is as good as his master, and such stuff. Alas! his poor father—how terrible!”

“And who has instilled these sentiments into his mind? why you and your books. Mark my words; you have already half made him believe

all these absurdities, and as the lad is bewitched and in love with you, who knows what will be his fate now he has no one to control him? and you are disposed to amuse yourself by encouraging his follies."

"These are your sentiments, are they, sister? well, if you think so, be they so. I have no control over events—they must needs take their course. Nevertheless, the death of a day-labourer, like George Radstock, will not prevent your going to the ball at B——, for brother says he was one of his best men, as father's before him."

"Indeed, then I shall go," said the elder sister.

And thus ended their conversation in reference to the awful and sudden death of one to whom they had spoken almost daily, and from whom, during the years of their very infancy, they had been constantly in the habit of receiving kind words and actions. But the Miss Winters were sisters of a gentleman farmer,



whose forefathers gloried in the name of honest Yeoman.

If such, however, were the sentiments of these young girls, they were, by no means, echoed by the voice of the more humble poor, still less so by the neighbouring gentlemen. Many a kind hand, in due proportion, the former to the latter, was eagerly held forth to assist the widow and orphans—many a kind word was uttered in the vain but not less christian attempt to soothe the broken heart of her who had been a fitting partner to one humble in position, yet high in virtue; while many and many a tale, not one bearing the slightest ground, in truth, found vent from idle mouths, and were re-echoed from village to town, even to the great City of London, and there the daily papers, then not of the high standing of the present era, set forth for the curious—that poor Radstock was supposed to have been murdered by mistake for another man—that a cudgel was found behind

a hedge, in a field adjacent to the village, clotted with blood, to which some of the unfortunate man's hair was attached; nevertheless, the murderer was never discovered, or was the cause of the murder known; moreover, that it was strange that his watch was untouched, as the four shillings he had in his pocket.

On the other hand, it was even asserted that he had left Michael Coddington's in anger; a quarrel had ensued, originating in Michael having hinted to the farmer his disapproval of his son's mode of life, and having followed him into the village, a scuffle took place, when the ill-fated man fell to rise no more.

High words one person positively declared had been heard about midnight, forgetting, or not being aware, that the man was dead ere the hour of ten had sounded on the village clock. Then as now, no invention was too absurd—no thought too idle—imagination even

went so far as to assert a tale, which, in after years, was again renewed, notwithstanding the most direct evidence to the contrary—that his second son had some cause for revenge against his own parent—and knowing that he was going, that night, to pay a considerable sum to farmer Winter—for which he had been sent to a neighbouring town—had waylaid, and struck his unfortunate father on the back of the head—rifled his pockets—fled—and left him to perish in the cold.

It so happened, however, that poor George was in bed and asleep when his parent died, and few, at the time, evinced more apparent sorrow. Moreover, he had no money, nor had he ever left the village.

Such, however, were the preposterous rumours that were wafted from the Land's End over to John O'Groat's. And similar ones do fly, and will fly on every strange event of life or death, conveying to the mind the slightest matter whereon to comment, or of romance, in refer-

ence to man's joy, or man's misery. There is no food, man will not more readily gorge on than the marvellous, tenfold the more readily if that marvel be connected with the misfortunes and miseries of their fellow creatures.

But the church bell tolls, conveying with its mellowed tone through the clear air many a bitter pang to the bereaved; look into that rural church-yard, look at that ancient ivy covered church, it is one wherein the faith of Christ is preached each sabbath morning and evening, by one who seeks not by fine oratory, or worldly pretences, to bewilder the senses of his hearers; what he has to tell is told with a whole heart's thankfulness and simplicity to those, the majority of whom listen equally with hearts alive to the hope that all the blessings he desires for them, should extend to their much beloved pastor. 'Tis he who now stands uncovered in the centre of the village throng—he makes no vain oration, he repeats in humble resignation the beautiful service for

the burial of the dead, and having with a full heart performed this sacred duty, he turns with kindly words and deeds to aid those who are left to mourn. Such a man may think much, but say little in reference to those whom it has been the will of God to take from among us, he knows if they have died in faith their joy is great—he desires to think no evil, he presumes not to suppose it. 'Tis for him to hope, God alone can grant them grace.

It was not his work to preach for an hour in order to gain praise from the world, though he would pray for a whole day by the bed-side of a dying pauper. In fact, he was truly the christian pastor of a rural village, and he asked no more; had such a man been offered the living of St. George's, or St. Margaret's, he would have refused it. He was satisfied with the quiet peaceful rectory he held, worth probably about three hundred pounds a year; out of which limited income he gave half to the poor, without any one dreaming of it, save those

to whom it was given ; in return he received their prayers and love, which being wafted to heaven made him rich indeed.

“ At church with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorned the venerable place,  
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,  
And fools who came to scoff, remained to pray,  
The service past around the pious man  
With steady zeal each honest rustic ran,  
E'en children followed with endearing wile,  
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.

Such was the Pastor of Lindford, Mr. Crawford. The funeral was over ; the body of Radford, was returned to that earth from which it came ; the mourners and idlers each went their several ways ; some to grieve, others to their occupations, some to laugh and play as lads and lasses will do, if he that dies be not immediately connected with themselves.


A moral may be drawn from the sudden death of this poor man, poor in station, for he was a

simple day labourer, poor in wealth, for his heard earnings were his all. And yet he had a mine of wealth which many might covet, an honest heart with strong religious faith. He had gone forth with the kindly intent of visiting a neighbour and a friend, and with a father's heart yearning for the welfare of his son—had it not been for the conduct of that son he might have still lived. Did such thoughts ever enter the heart of that son—did he in after life ever ask himself—did he ever hear that his parent's visit on that fatal night was principally on his account—doubtless he did, for Michael Coddington was too truly grieved by the sad loss of his friend, not to have told the tale in such terms as he in his simple nature would have desired should have entered his soul. Yet how few of us, even among the very best, ever give themselves the trouble, or are even desirous to contemplate their selfishness; were they so to do, I question whether they would not find that there is

scarcely a passing act throughout the day that does not emanate from that sin.

The most simple acts of man's life are selfish—and although there is a vulgar expression—that every man has a right to do that which he likes with his own, be assured the words are so read only here on earth. Our time is not our own, if by devoting it to some good cause we can aid those who are bound to us by the ties of nature, or of love. Our talents are not our own, but given to us that we may endeavour to use them for the benefit of mankind. Our wealth is not our own, solely that we may squander it in selfish pleasures ; but given to us with a double duty to perform. Our poverty ought not to deter us, however bitter the struggle, from earnestly endeavoring to perform those duties physically or mentally, which may be allotted to us ; for we are assured if we labour cheerfully, sooner or later God will aid us.

The very meals we enjoy, in a true sense, ought not entirely to be considered as our own





—if there be those who have claims of blood or kindred, or friendship, who are starving in silence—well do I know such sentiments as these will be ridiculed by the many, as theoretical absurdities, though they go home to the hearts of the few as noble as they are generous—do not let me be misunderstood, however. I am not desirous to suggest any such absurdities as an equal division of goods ; otherwise, those having the least, would require the most ; I simply wish to impart that every man should endeavour to do his duty by his fellow man in accordance with his means, whatever they may be. To relieve the distresses of a man who, having the power and opportunity, will do nothing to serve himself, would be simply to do him a present good to secure a lasting evil. On the other hand, were I about to give myself some great indulgence—not necessary, but most pleasing, I should commit a positive sin ; knowing there were those near and dear to me in want, did I not relinquish such source of

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gratification, and confer on them a real blessing. One such action as this sends home to the heart a feeling of more unalloyed joy than all the gratifications I can name.

If George Radstock, young as he was, had done his duty—simple as it was—instead of giving way to his selfish pursuits—his father's life might have been spared.

## CHAPTER XIV.

" I come no more to make you laugh, things now  
That bear a mighty and a serious brow,  
Sad, high, and working full of state and woe,  
Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow."

THERE were few, very few in the neighbourhood of Lindford, whether rich or poor, young or old, highly born or lowly born, for he was well and widely known, who felt the death so sudden and so sad of poor Radstock as did the inmates of the largest and richest mansion

of that luxuriant vale; for many years, Mr. Passmore had known and respected the man; and among the few to whom he spoke, or of whom he ever took notice, when riding or walking over his domain, was George, the elder.

Yet, truly grieved as they all were at the sad intelligence, not one among the number took the matter more bitterly to heart than did the little Mary, then staying at the Hall. Often, from her earliest childhood, had she sat on the old man's knee—often had he, notwithstanding his fatherly affection for his own children, expressed his love for this fair child, and granted her the palm above all the village girls, for her joyous, winning ways; indeed, the old man was wont often to say to his friend Michael—"take care of this little pet of thine, she will some day make her way beyond a roof of thatch. The mind which God has given her, is far above those with whom she is wont to associate." And he was not far wrong;

the young girl was daily progressing in those attainments which enable a child in every sphere in life to rise, if she have but an earnest will.

The frost of the previous evening, which had recommenced with the termination of the snow-storm, had now increased in bitterness. I feel cold at the very thought of such a night, though they are by no means disagreeable to those who possess warm rooms, abundant firing, and cheerful homes; tenfold then ought such blessings to open their hearts to the wants of the poor; but as I said before—I feel cold at the mere thought of such a night—so let me enter the large dining-room of Lindford Hall—large as it is, however, not a draught of unpleasant air disturbed those who occupied it, nor was there the slightest fear of rheumatism; beneath the high and polished oaken-carved chimney-piece, on the centre of which prominently appeared the Passmore arms, blazed a

bright and cheerful fire. The shutters were all closed and secured, while the deep recesses of the large windows were hidden by the heavy folds of handsome velvet curtains. The carpet was even warm to the feet—being of thick piled Persian texture, covering almost the entire of the large apartment, while beyond it the polished oaken flooring was scarcely seen. In the centre of the room stood an oblong carved oak table, highly polished, an unusual piece of furniture for the present day; yet far more beautiful and aristocratic in my humble estimation, than one of polished mahogany. On this table a handsome dessert was placed—not an extravagant one, but such as a man of Mr. Passmore's means and habits would naturally have. Wine was there, port, and sherry, and claret—good port too—such as is seldom met with in these days, and claret, such as few men would refuse; if the room however was abundantly luxurious, or I might better explain it by saying it was refinedly comfortable, the

party therein assembled was still more worthy of admiration.

It was a home party—a party among whom there was but one heart, one feeling, one interest—and the dinner being over, and the night, as I have said, intensely cold, they had all gathered around the broad hearth in the full enjoyment of warmth and conversation. In a capacious arm chair sat the head of the house, he was aged, but still in apparent health; opposite to him was Miss Handley, the much loved and respected governess, while on a low stool at her feet, with her fair head on her lap, reclined her beloved charge, Augusta Passmore. And the little Mary, already admitted in the circle, sat near her friend and protector. On the rug lay a noble and magnificent deer hound, alike the companion of the squire and the pet of the whole family. Frederick and his tutor, Mr. Eden, were also there. The party, as may be supposed, were in full conversation in reference to poor Radstock's death. The

squire deplored it, for the man had long been a favorite, from his honest upright ways, as well as from his constant habit of meeting him almost daily, as he rode or walked about the property. All in their several ways, among those who sat before that bright and cheerful fire-side, felt regret for him, thus suddenly taken as it were from among them—still more for those who were left in sorrow. And while Mr. Passmore expressed his desire to aid the widow and her children, he equally made enquiries as to their conduct and characters. But among all that circle there was not one who felt so keenly as the little girl—who, though among them, cherished and loved, was not one of them—to her the dead still lived, in memory of her earliest years. Radstock had been to her as a second father, and while tears of affection and regret chased each other down her pale young cheek, all the rough man's acts of endearment—all his words of kindness recurred to her in full force, and she thought not less of



those young as herself, who were now left fatherless.

“Cry not, my child,” said the old man, tenderly, “for tears will not recall the friend for whom you grieve. It was the will of God that he should die—and die thus, without previous warning ; but it is the duty of us all to be prepared, and then it is of little importance how or when we are called—is it not so,” he added, addressing Mr. Eden, “so let us rather think how best we can save those left to struggle on earth.”

It was unusual with Mr. Passmore ever to say much on any subject—still more rarely did he enter into the cares or sufferings of those with whom he was associated by property, but he was interested in this family—and thus he continued to question Mr. Eden as to their case.

“Had he many children—and if so, what may be their ages and pursuits—if you cannot inform me I must endeavour to pay a visit to our

worthy rector, who, doubtless, can afford me every information."

"Why, sir," replied Eden, "our little friend Mary, doubtless, is better able to answer your questions than I am; however, she will correct me if I err.—I believe he has left a widow and four children. The elder is a strong, hard-working young man, he has long aided his poor father in his daily labours, and added his earnings to the general stock, and I was this morning told that farmer Winter would keep him at the higher rate of wages his parent earned."

"That is generous and well," said Mr. Passmore.

"And with reference to the other children—the girls attend the parish school and assist their mother in performing her household duties; hitherto they have lived in comparative comfort, as the father and son together, could, on an average, earn five-and-twenty shillings a-week, but now their means

will of course be much restricted. The second son whom I have not yet named, is a lad some sixteen years of age—from all accounts he is totally different from the rest of the family—idle to a degree—in all matters I am told, in which manual labour is concerned—but quick and daring, and holding strange opinions, far beyond his years, as regards the passing events of life—his time is generally occupied in idling at Ashdown Farm, carrying messages for the girls there—reading old newspapers, and books of all sorts—he yearns and fancies to rise with the world—I fear he will do little good here.”

“What, wont he work, wont he work?” said the old gentleman.

“I fancy it would be difficult to make him put his hand to the plough, and were he to do so, the field would receive little benefit. ’Tis said the lad has strange notions in regard to the rights of the people—and as far as he understands these rights, I think he has only come

to the conclusion that he has a right to let other people work while he may eat the bread of idleness."

"But this must be seen to, Eden, this must be seen to—hitherto my estate has never been cursed with a disaffected and dissatisfied people. Miss Handley, will you kindly see this lad's mother, I should like to hear more of him. These Winter girls, also, they desire, I fancy, to tread on the heels of our country dames. The times are altering. Well, may I never live to see the day when the name of Englishman is degraded by the ill-judged and ungenerous clamours of an uneducated and discontented mob."

"Nor I either, father," added Frederick, "but surely if there be just cause of complaint, you would listen to every man's voice—though that voice issue from the lips of a day labourer."

"Nonsense, Fred, nonsense; where did you pick up such notions; people in that class have

no complaints if they are fairly paid for their work, and have wherewithal to live on."

"But, dear father, are they always fairly paid, and have they enough to live on—I much fear not—true they have here—thank God—on your estate—yet you have been so long a hermit that I imagine you seldom look beyond the boundaries of Lindford. At Eton we hear a different tale; there is much poverty, much misery, both in the large towns as in the country, and its evils are discontent and sadness, and not altogether without reason among the labouring classes. On this estate, few, if any, day labourer receives less than twelve shillings weekly; but it is not so in half the other counties throughout England; indeed ten, or even eight shillings is more like the average, and I fancy it must be somewhat difficult to maintain a wife and family on such a pittance. Indeed when I am a landlord, and I pray it may be long first, dear daddy, I shall never let a farm till I have received a

distinct agreement in the lease that every labourer shall be paid at least twelve shillings a-week. If the tenant proposing for the farm, takes it on such terms, and can prove to me the impossibility of meeting such wages—then I shall reduce the rental to enable him, or find a tenant who can. No man shall have a right to enrich himself on the misery of his fellow man. And the larger his own stake the greater his duty to his neighbour.”

“Are these your sentiments, Eden?” drily said Mr. Passmore.

“Such have never been expressed by me, nevertheless, I must own, in all honour and candour, in a great measure I concur in them; however, there is much to be said on both sides, and as it is your wish that Frederick should leave Eton and travel, I think it would be as well that he gives no decided opinions as regards public matters, till he has seen more of the world, and mixed more with those whose opinions are formed with mature consideration.”

“You are right, Mr. Eden, you are right; and now, ladies, be good enough to give us some tea, and we will join you in the drawing-room. Here, darling,” said the old man, drawing his lovely girl to his heart, “give me one kiss; and beware your brother does not force you to marry a republican.”

The sweet child threw her arms round the neck of her much loved father, and tenderly embraced him. Then patting the head of her noble deer hound, said—

“Come, my pet Bran, let us leave the gentlemen to settle the affairs of the nation.”

No sooner was the door closed, than Mr. Passmore turned to Eden.

“You have promised to take charge of this young champion of the labouring classes, and give him a sight of the world—that is you will fly from London to Paris—Paris to Rome—Rome to Naples—perhaps touch at Malta on your way to Constantinople—where, having smoked a pipe with the Sultan, you will re-

turn by the way of Russia. All this in one year. Arrived at Lindford again, you will force me to turn away my old cook, Mr. Lardner, to make way for a foreign artist in a white apron and paper cap—turn up your nose at this port, which has been five-and-twenty years in my cellar—declare that our golden ale is bitter, and our Christmas sirloins disgusting—in fact, drink nothing but weak claret, and eat kickshaws—stink the whole house with your Turkish pipes and meerschums. And if you remain long enough in Russia, perhaps learn to drink the oil out of the lamps. In my time, we have ever thought old England good enough to live in; though I did once take a peep at Paris; on my return, however, I must confess, I found Lindford Hall so much to my liking, that I have scarcely left it since, save to visit London for a brief period. All young men of the present day, however, must necessarily travel; and as far as it enables them to obtain a knowledge of



foreign countries, and foreign languages, it is well they should do so ; but I fancy you will not come back with un-English habits and republican humbug filling your heads, or Lindford Hall shall be fortified, and you shall make your entry by storm. Added to which, I am desirous Frederick should go to Christ Church, take two first classess—though I have never clearly ascertained that first class University men—save in the University—have ever greatly distinguished themselves in after life ; moreover, he must stand for the county, when a vacancy occurs. I shall not curtail your expenses, or direct your route ; I rely strictly on you, Eden. I place my beloved boy entirely under your charge ; you well know my feelings towards him ; and so, good friend, if we rightly understand each other, the sooner you start the better, when the days are lengthened by returning spring, or maybe, I shall not live to see you return.”

“ God grant you may, sir,” replied Mr.

Eden. "Nevertheless, I think with you, if our travels are to be limited to the year, we shall do well to start with the singing of the lark, and thus secure a long summer before us ; the route you may suggest as the most advisable, we shall be glad to have your opinion on, by which, I am sure, Frederick will be guided."

"Why Paris, I conclude, will be your first point—the continent is now open to Englishmen and English gold. Bonaparte is rusticated at St. Helena, and the king has his own again. What say you, my boy, Paris or Peru, St. Petersburg or Constantinople—whither are you bound?"

"I trust, my dear father, you will not think I desire to differ from your wish, when I express no desire to visit the continent at all, though I have an ardent one, at all events, in the first instance, to visit my own country, particularly the rural districts, though scarcely less so all the large towns in the kingdom.

With your permission, therefore, I should prefer passing this year in old England, leaving Paris and St. Petersburg for a future occasion; we can pass our summer pleasantly in visiting the coast scenery, from the Nore to the Land's End. Let us then take Wales, while the winter may be well occupied in some of the large inland towns."

"You surprise me, Fred," said Mr. Passmore, "I never yet heard any man desire to visit his own country; he leaves to others, generally speaking, the task of enlightening him as to whether there be anything worthy of notice in merrie England. Few books, indeed, are now read, and fewer written, that are not interlarded with French quotations and French sentiments; well may governesses and boarding-school proprietors, be required to teach a smattering of French, or novel writers would henceforth cease to exist, and publishers to thrive. However, I like your English notions, still more so as you desire to learn something of

the land of your birth ; and I shall feel more happy in the knowledge that the child of my heart, and heir to my property, is at no great distance from me."

"I agree also, most thoroughly, with Frederick's sentiments, my dear sir," said Mr. Eden, "and gladly shall I accompany him through the rich vales, and the smiling towns of our merry England."

"Well, dear father, I am rejoiced you feel satisfied with my wishes ; and now, as you are looking tired, let us leave this subject of parting till to-morrow—it will be time enough, if we leave you two months hence."

## CHAPTER XV.

I am a stranger here in Glostershire.  
These high, wild hills, and rough, uneven ways,  
Draw out our miles, and make them wearisome.

THE only public-house in the little village of Lindford boasted of the proud name of the "Passmore Arms." Beer-shops were then not sanctioned by law; and as few came to that peaceful, rural hamlet, who required the accommodation of an inn—save those who visited the Hall, where they found tolerable accom-

modation—it neither advanced in dignity, or retrograded in comfort.

The ale, drawn and brewed for his customers by Mr. Symthe, was pure and wholesome. The bacon and eggs, which he could add to that ale if a chance customer required a meal, were the one from his own yard, the other of his own curing, and were generally good ; and he, the landlord, who gloried in the possession of a little farm in addition to the profits of his rural hostelry, was an honest, hearty man. His mornings were principally devoted to the cultivation of his broad acres, as customers there were few for the Passmore Arms ere nightfall, save that a chance passer, or a tramping pedlar, required a pot of home-brewed to help him on his way, or that a thirsty neighbour should indulge in a similar luxury with his early dinner—on such occasions, it was supplied by his trusty niece and bar-woman, for he, being a widower, without encumbrance, according to worldly phraseology, had adopted

a buxom and good-humoured, middle-aged relation, to attend to the duties of his household during his daily out-of-door occupation.

When night closed in, however, and the shutters were fast closed, during the long months of winter, as also of early spring-time, our worthy landlord, Mr. Smythe, was never absent from an old leather-bottomed arm-chair, placed near the crackling blazing fire, which burnt on his hearth to welcome any one who might look in for a mug of warm ale, or a little gossip.

Whether they came, however, to spend their money or their time, they were equally welcome, for in so small and secluded a place, all were known to one another, and happily, few were at enmity.

The apartment, wherein sat the worthy Mr. Symthe, was like most apartments of a similar nature seen in such places, being half kitchen, half parlour, with a bar combined; on the one side, a high-back fixed wooden screen, which

kept the draught from without from those within, as the outer-door was continually opened and shut, for those who came, as those who left, after their pint, or half pint, as might be.

It was probably two months after the death of old Radstock, who, by-the-bye, was already well nigh forgotten by the many. The days had much lengthened, the wheat was already an inch or two above the ground, and the birds' mating time near at hand, already commenced to enliven the meadows with their delicious melodies. The weather had been unusually bright and fine for the season, in fact, all nature looked gay, and the hearts of men imbibing happy omens for the coming season of work, and consequent wealth, became cheerful also. To those who have probably existed throughout a long and severe winter on a vast moorland—to those who have vegetated four long months, amid frost, and snow, in some distant village, and wild scenery—and not less



to those who have lived through the long, dreary winter months, even in such a sunny village as that of Lindford, the approach of the lengthening days—the first carol of the lark—the first culled violet or primrose, are all, in their several ways, joys to the untutored rural labourer, as to his family, which few high-born dames, or enriched mechanics, can ever really know or justly estimate, which, nevertheless, bring with them, in their simplicity, to the cottage-door, hopes of joy and prosperity for the future. They are, in fact, God's brightest gifts, announcing that the summer time will surely follow—the time when it is the duty of all to gather in the harvest, that we sink not when the tree is leafless, and the ground white with the falling snow.

Early as was the spring, the sun shone brightly, casting o'er the earth, cheerfulness and genial warmth. The nights, however, were

still keen and frosty, rightly appointed so, for they kept back the too forward budding fruit-trees, and told us of the season.

In his accustomed arm-chair, sat the good host, his large mug of ale was placed on a little table beside him, while, from the long pipe he held in his mouth, he ever and anon puffed a cloud and addressed his customers, who were rather treated as guests—for although they paid their small reckonings, he considered them almost as if they were a party assembled at his bidding, while they returned the courtesy, as were they, really smoking and drinking ale, at the expense of the worthy landlord of the Passmore Arms.

In addition to the landlord, on the night which I now, after long years, recall to my recollection, as were it yesterday, there were but six persons assembled, two were men, passed the meridian of life, two farm labourers, the other the village baker, and the lad George Radstock ; they were all smoking, save

the baker and Radstock. The latter was sitting on a small, three-legged stool, near the the fire, the others near the skreen.

Puff, went the landlord, then pulling his pipe from his mouth, he thus spoke.

“How is Miss Winter? Aye, George, my boy, it is seldom thou visits me—wilt have a drop of home-brewed? Methinks, Master Winter be too fine a gentleman for such as thee, lad, so it is no use to be dilly-dallying after those girls, I can tell you.”

“Those girls, as you call them, are not at home, Master Smythe,” replied George; “and if they were, it is no reason why I should not look in to see so old and kind a friend of my father’s as you were; besides, there’s no comfort at home—mother is always niggling and worrying, and setting up brother as being a dutiful son—’tis John does this, and John does that; but I’m not going to be a day-labourer for all she says it, no not I.”

“Well, there thou art wrong, Georgy, my

boy ; all men must work to live ; and those who won't work, ought to starve, so no more of your won't work."

"No, you are wrong, George, you are wrong," chimed in the baker ; "I told thy mother I would take thee as a 'prentice in the baking line, without fee or reward ; there will be plenty of custom for two of us here, by-and-bye. Besides, I'm getting old, without children ; who knows but thou might have all the custom of the place. Baking won't dirty thy hands, lad. And you can carry the bread up to farmer Winter's daily."

But George had as little intention of being an honest and thriving baker, or a brewer, as he had of being a day-labourer.

"No," he replied, "I am not going to remain here all my life, I can tell you. I shall go ere long to London, and learn what's going on. For all the squire is so rich, and so proud, and Farmer Winter would be a fine gentleman—one man's as good as another—and I do

not intend to live in this village, to be under their orders all my life, I assure you."

"I can tell you what, lad," replied the host, "much as I respected your poor father, you will not come here to talk evil of the ould squire, I assure thee; true we see little of him, but he's lived among his people some three-score years and more; and if he has not done much to enrich his tenants, he does less to injure them. I've lived here myself, man and boy, well nigh fifty years, and I have scarce heard a word of complaint fall from the lips of any man in this neighbourhood—methinks the place be good enough for thee—indeed, the times may become far worse—I, for one, thank God, that things are as they are, rather than any great change should be effected in our position. Hitherto this has been a peaceful, happy village. If thou art not content to work, lad, like thy betters do for their daily bread, the sooner you are off to London the better. And, hark ye, boy—if Miss Winter has taught thee

all these fine notions, take her with you, do you hear, for a pretty pair you'll make; but be sure you do not return as beggars or trampers into Lindford village, or not a mug of ale wilt thou get from me."

George Radstock was about to reply, when a loud knock was heard at the outward door; this was an unusual occurrence, as the arrival of a stranger, particularly after nightfall, was a rare occurrence at the Passmore Arms.

"Hallo!" said the landlord, putting his mug on the table, after taking a good draught to wash down the effects of his speech to George. "Hallo! lassie, just lift the latch and see who be knocking at this hour of the night—it aint one of the Lindford folks, surely, for they all knows their way to enter here without knocking, methinks."

Old Smythe's niece did go to the door, having a candle in her hand, which the wind rushing in extinguished, so that she did not at

the moment see the person of him who addressed her.

Whoever it was, he thus spoke.

“If I judge rightly, young woman, this is an inn or public-house—I am a traveller, tired, and hungry, and if you can accommodate me with a bed and some refreshment, I shall thank you, and have the means of payment.”

“Walk in, sir, walk in, sir—till I shut the door, and get a light. Here, uncle, here’s a gentleman, who seeks a bed and some supper.”

“A gentleman!” said the landlord, “this be no house for gentlemen; however, our beds be clean, for all that, and good enough; and as for our beer and bacon, why a lord may go farther and fare worse, than sup on the one, and wash it down with the other, so beg the gentleman to come forward to the fire, for, may be, he is cold as well as hungry.”

The stranger who entered the hospitable

landlord's apartment, required no further bidding.

As we are not bound to take the girl's word for his being a gentleman, let me introduce him to the company assembled, that they may judge for themselves.

In age, the stranger might have been forty-five, or even fifty, it is, at all times, a point difficult to judge, after the meridian of life is passed, far more so, as regards one, whose person was remarkably thin, and whose hair, black as the wing of the raven, showed already every grey hair he possessed—his height was rather below than above the usual standard of man, particularly in those rural districts—and as for his dress, it might have been that of a poor gentleman, or of a schoolmaster, or a mechanic of the better class out of work ; from his manners, it was very evident, that had he ever belonged to the class with which, apparently, chance had then brought him in contact, luck



or circumstances, or more probably mind, however directed, had caused him to be no longer one of them.

Having walked calmly into the room, and thanked the landlord for admission, he quickly disembarassed himself of a small pack or walking knapsack, strapped across his shoulders, and then seating himself on the stool, which George Radstock had vacated, expressed his joy in no measured terms, that he should, at length, have found a haven of rest.

While he speaks, however, let those who listen watch his countenance ; a piercing, black, and brilliant pair of eyes, peep out from beneath black and bushy eyebrows, seeming to watch, with the eagerness of a tiger, those seated around him and their every movement, his nose was somewhat prominent, yet the small mouth and beautiful set of teeth, which varied its expression at each word he uttered, prevented his face from being either positively

Jewish in expression or even unpleasing ; cunning was more often stamped there than openness, thought than merriment, still it was very evident he could be all things to all people, as occasion or interest suited him, and yet, that he ever had an object in view, and that object, generally speaking, was to serve himself in some way or another, while he professed to be the friend of every one else.

“ Well, Mr. Smythe,” said the newly arrived guest, “ for such I am told is your name, your domicile is warm and comfortable, doubly so to a tired man. You hold a club, I perceive. I hope I don’t intrude—but the fact is, I have had some difficulty in finding this said village of Lindford—one person told me to turn to the right, another to the left—had I taken, however, all the turns which presented themselves, I fancy I should have been there or thereabouts from whence I started—walking is thirsty work, and famishing also—so with your permission, I will just taste your ale. Be

good enough to order a quart—while awaiting it, with permission, I will take a pull at your mug, no offence—your health, good fellows, no offence—capital beer indeed—nothing like the rural districts for home-brewed—and now, my good man, be pleased to order half a dozen rashers, to be put into the pan, I'm not particular, thick or thin, four or five eggs will do, I'm easily satisfied—your health neighbour Smythe, 'pon honour, the beer's of the best—here, young fellow, vacate, and let me rest my weary limbs in our good host's arm-chair—I have had a long and a rough walk, and you look as if you had done nothing to earn your ease for a week past.”

“You never said a truer word, sir, whatever your name may be,” replied the landlord, who left the room to give orders for the desired refreshment, adding aside—“but you are an easy chap, at any rate, a Londoner, may be ;” then adding aloud—“but you appear to be acquainted with my name, though I do not re-

collect seeing you afore in these parts ; I wonder what yours may be ?”

The ears of the stranger, however, were as quick as his sight, and he immediately replied—

“ My name, good Smythe, is Jacob Clarke, at your command—a humble delegate, from the North, on his way to the Loyal City of London, on business connected with our oppressed fellow countrymen. The times are advancing, friend Smythe, rapidly advancing to more prosperous days, for men like you and I, who are doomed to sup on poached eggs and rashers, while the good folks of the Hall up yonder, I conclude, for the darkness did not permit me to catch a sight of your good lord’s mansion, are feasting on venison and turtle. But the times are fast advancing to a more prosperous age, when rich and poor, old and young, will all have a fair cut at the sirloin.”

“ I’m dashed if I knows what a delegate may be,” said honest John ; “ and as for what

Squire Passmore thinks fit to sup on, that's no business for such as we. We gets our land at a low and fair rental ; and there are few poor here but the idle, and the aged, and the latter are cared for. The times are well enough for us, so let them advance elsewhere, says I. But here comes your bacon and eggs, and if ye be hungry, you'll find them as good as venison and turtle, if not, you'd better go up to the Hall and sup with the Squire. Say you are a stranger, tired and hungry, and you'll be welcome."

"Yes, yes, man, I know all that ; but let us have the eatables, I pray. You say truly, such fare is good enough for any man, and I wish no better. Were I to go up to the Hall, may be, they would admit me, as they would a starved dog, for Englishmen are fond of animals, but not by the right of man towards man, to share of his abundance. Still I am glad to hear you speak in such terms of your position here. I shall note in my memoranda

—‘Lindford a village—inhabited by contented people—no poor—rents low—Squire respected—ale wholesome and brewed with hops—bacon and eggs excellent.’ ”

And with this he finished the last morsel on his dish, not even heeding the cat, which sat purring by his chair, drained the last drop of his ale, and drawing his chair, with the most perfect freedom to the fire, asked for a pipe, and requested to be supplied with a glass of hot brandy-and-water to keep the cold out.

“A pipe you shall have in welcome,” replied the landlord, “but as for spirits, I’m not licensed, and I doubt if you get a spoonful in the village.”

“Oh, I see, I see clearly,” said Mr. Jacob, “serfs every one of you. Wine, brandy, and Hollands for the Squire, small beer and ale for the working classes—perhaps water would be good enough for such as we are, serves to keep our spirits down and the man alive.”

Old Smythe was becoming somewhat ruffled

at these unexpected and ill-understood remarks from the stranger ; and he answered somewhat quickly.

“ And good enough, too, for all I know to the contrary ; but if such ale as you have already drank a quart of, be not good enough for any honest man in England, then the times are advancing indeed. But spirits I have none, nor do I want them in my cellar. Father and son, we have occupied these premises for more than half a century, and I scarcely recollect their being ever asked for before.”

“ Well, man, no offence, no offence, be calm, the times are advancing—you will have plenty of spirits here ere long be assured. In the meantime, I have had a long and a rough walk, as I said before, so be good enough to tell that buxom wench of thine to toss me up a mug of egg-flip, hot and strong. I’ll drink to the health of Squire Passmore, and prosperity to the village of Lindford. And you, my good men,” added he, turning to the as-

tonished listeners, who sat gaping and wondering at the impudence and easiness of manner of one, who, it was clear, was little above them in position. "Well, my good men, and what may your callings be—slaves to the wealthy farmers—scolding wives at home—small wages—many children—out for an hour's recreation, and half-a-pint on tick, I see, a little jollification, talking over your misfortunes, justly abusing your landlords, heart-broken and bound in chains of slavery—drinking bad beer and wishing to be free—and you will be free, my men, you will be free—but the time is not yet come to strike the blow."

Be dad then, you're just wrong, Mr. Jacob Clarke, if that be your name. I for one am not an agricultural slave, as you are pleased to term us; but I trust an honest baker; for many a long year I have made bread for the whole of this village, and earned a good living, and laid by a few pounds into the bargain. I want no



change—I'm contented as I am, and hope to live and die here where I was born."

"You surprise me good man," broke in our friend Jacob, "you make bread, and as you say you supply the whole village, I have doubtless just now partaken of your handy work, and I can fairly pronounce it good—very good, pure, wholesome, and doubtless unadulterated either with potatoes or alum. But look you, Mr. Baker, you and I may live to see the day when the corn-laws will be abolished, and then if you have saved a pound or two you will save twenty—so you will end in being one of us."

"Nay, nay, man, I tell thee I want naught abolished. I'm willing to bide as I am."

"And you, good men are you also bakers," said Mr. Clarke, "or what may be your honest calling, I must not offend you, I see, by calling you agricultural slaves, so I conclude you are hard working and ill paid day labourers."

"We are day labourers said one of the men,"

who sat opposite to the recently arrived guest ; “ but neither overworked or ill paid. We might certainly be better, far easier, be worse off than we now are, and I fancy were we to follow the plans you suggest, we should soon have neither work nor wages ; doubtless you comes from some of them manufacturing places, where men work one day for high wages and lays idle the next—drinking and abusing their betters—but there be none such here, so you be come to the wrong place. We have wives and children too ; wives who do not scold but who look to our homes and comforts while we are doing our duty ; and if we do come down here for an hour or so, to see our good neighbour, Mr. Smythe, and smoke a pipe—we goes home, to those who rejoice in our happiness, and would grieve were we not to enjoy ourselves a bit.”

“ Well spoken, my man, and truthfully,” said the landlord, “ and I for one will never refuse a mug of ale to those of my neighbours who

cannot afford to pay for it, we wants no changes here, I say, and as for what you means, by delegates, I have heard talk lately, of such people, and have read something in the papers, about chartist delegates and all that, but I tell you what it is man, we dont, understand such matters in Lindford, nor do we want you here, putting wrong notions into people's heads. You are welcome to bed and board for this night, for my house is my own, and I could not turn a dog away from my door by night, who came hungry and thirsty, and asked for a crust or a mug—but I hope you will leave us in the morning, and go your way.”

“Be not offended man, be not offended, I shall not be offended. I shall soon make myself scarce. I see you are an ignorant set here, but you lad, I have not heard the sound of your voice, you appear somewhat too young to have formed any decided ideas on the subject of man and his position here on earth, and if I mistake not from your appearance, you are

neither baker, tinker, or tailor, nor are you an agricultural slave. The son of some neighbouring farmer well to do I conclude—been to a boarding school, learnt to read and write, hunt, shoot and lark, aye, well, probably you can see farther than your neighbours, and know what a chartist means.”

“No he dont,” said Mr. Smythe, “he learns nothing but idleness. As yet he is the foolish son of an honest father, who died not long since, a man who was but a day labourer, but he was respected and esteemed by his neighbours, and for his sake we put up with the lad, but if he goes on as he has been going, idling his time with the girls and wringing his poor mother’s heart, he will lose all friends here, I can tell him. The boy’s head is already filled with a pack of nonsense, about equality and all such stuff, the rights of man and discontent, but it wont do, it can’t do—he must go to work or starve or beg, and he will beg in vain here. I tell you what, Mr. Clarke, an honest

man is the noblest work of God ; we are all sent here to labour in our proper situations, and alike high or low, rich or poor, we have duties to perform. We are not sent here to live on the hard earnings of our fellow men, or to be enriched for promoting sentiments of dissatisfaction at the lot to which it has pleased God to call us. No honest Englishman would desire to be the paid hireling of a mercenary people. And were all classes, to-morrow, to become equal in station, equal in wealth, the next day would see the man of honest mind, genius, and activity, rise to place, power, and fortune, while the dross would sink to the bottom again.

“These are your sentiments are they Mr. Landlord,” said Jacob, taking his pipe deliberately from his mouth, “so you are satisfied to live surrounded by your pigs and brewing-utensils, and to die as you have lived, the host of the Passmore Arms, to be taxed for the pleasures of the great, and to slave on while the aristocracy enjoy themselves through the

sweat of your brow ; well if this plan suits you—here's your good health, and long life—to do you justice, your ale is of an excellent quality and that somewhat lusty maiden in your bar understands aright the concoction of flip, so I drink her health also and a good husband, an agricultural slave or a baker or any rural selection that may suit her pursuits in life—mine are widely different ; I feel that the time is at hand when despotism will no longer stalk abroad in the light of day, I see the time at hand when Englishmen, now called free, will be truly so, and I see no reason why this lad should not select a path more fitting to his liking than to be a follower of the Hall.

“ There are no hirelings or followers of the Hall here, I tell you, said, John,” becoming more enraged, “ and I must now bid you good night, neighbours, for it is already past the time when the village is hushed in slumber. Good night, neighbours.”

"Good night," returned he, as the men rose and left the room.

"And you, George, be off, and never give a thought of what has passed to-night, but let me hear you are changing, lad, and you will never want a helping hand while your father's friend, John Smythe, has got a loaf. You are welcome to remain up if you like, Mr. Clarke, but I must to bed, for my duties commence early on the morn. If not I will show you the best bed we have to offer."

"Thank you, friend, thank you, I shall be glad to go to rest, for my walk has been far and rough, and your good ale is soothing, so I am ready to follow. God night, lad." And with this he stopped, and while the landlord's back was turned, said to George, quickly,

"Meet me here, lad, about eight in the morning, we will walk towards farmer Winter's."

And with this he followed the host to his

bed-room. A clean, neat, fresh and comfortable bed was prepared for him, and he, Mr. Jacob Clarke, having taken possession, was soon buried in oblivion to all, save the enjoyment of a sound sleep.



## CHAPTER XVI.

'Tis to work and have such pay  
As just keeps life from day to day,  
In your limbs, as in a cell,  
For the tyrants' use to dwell.

A DAMP, dull, thick mist hung over the Vale of Lindford on the following morning, a mist which the spring-time often brings to the neighbourhood of rivers, and little could be seen beyond the opposite houses, as Mr. Clarke hastily attired himself in his rusty suit, and

prepared to descend to the scene of his evening's carousal. As he proceeded to dress and make those slight ablutions, which he conceived necessary for the adornment of his person, he thus soliloquised.

“ So the good people here and hereabouts want nothing—they are contented and happy, willing to be serfs, ready to submit to the despotic wishes of those in wealth and ostentation, willing to be ground to the dust, and exist on a small pittance, hardly earned by the sweat of their brows, never complaining—always rejoicing. This is an unhealthy state of things which cannot last, indeed it ought not. I shall cast a fire-brand into their last year's harvest. It must be my duty—it is my duty towards those I serve, to make them know their own strength ; a horse, poor animal, if he knew his would no longer submit to the tyranny and oppression of man ; and why should reasoning creature, formed after God's image ; such things must not be ; I must open their

eyes to their weakness and show them their strength, or we shall end in being slaves.”

Such were the thoughts of this amiable delegate of confusion and disorder. Such are the sentiments, alas! of many, who having nothing to lose are desirous to gain by the misfortunes of their fellow men. Heaven help us from such fiends in human shape, they are a curse to the country at large, and yet men like Clarke are tolerated and permitted to go free, filling the heads of the ignorant and idle with unsound sentiments under the most noble banner of liberty and justice; terms which they disgrace, sentiments which they dishonor only in proportion as they misjudge them.

“And this lad,” continued Jacob, putting the finishing tie to his rusty black silk neck-cloth. “I read his character well. A little learning—the most dangerous of acquisitions—much idleness, the mother of all evil—an ill-directed mind, wishing to be above his

present position, but neither having intellect to gain his object, or knowing well what to be at; probably, fancies, as boys will, that he is in love with one of these rich farmer's daughters, named last evening, who, doubtless, with ignorance equal to his own has led him astray; and yet there is cunning if nothing better in his eye; he is evidently not one of the contented and happy of this vale of Rasselas, decidedly not desirous to serve the great man who lives in the big house, or to eat the bread given in charity by friend Smythe. In good hands he may be made useful; I must speak to the boy, and if so be he inclineth that way, may take him with me to London, the only place where young ideas are nourished in a hot bed till they bloom into activity—and where old ones thrive. But the air of these rural pastures is keen, healthy and appetising, notwithstanding the quart of fog I have swallowed when opening my casement to peep on its rural beauties; fogs I see

hang over the golden vale of this garden of Eden, as thickly as they do in the purlieus of of Whitechapel, or the bye-ways of mine own loved Manchester; so to breakfast. Those rashers of my landlord's were not bad."

And having uttered these opinions to himself he descended to the sanded floored kitchen of the Passmore Arms, where he found everything neat, orderly and clean, a bright fire crackled on the hearth, the rafters were filled with highly smoked fitches of bacon, the kettle hissed on the hob, the cat lay stretched out and purring in the enjoyment of warmth and comfort, while a breakfast table was spread, whereon appeared good, wholesome bread and butter; in fact nothing could be more comfortable—nothing more convincing of the truth of all John Smythe assertions, that peace and comfort was the order of the village—nothing more in contradiction to all Jacob's assertions that those who live honestly and work hardly, are not slaves, serfs and hirelings. And such, doubtless, he fully believed

in his own mind; but it was not the object of such men to believe that the lot of any one is that of peace, his sole desire is to think others better as regards their lot of life—such men are never content to let well alone, they know no peace themselves, their desire is that none others shall—commotion, turbulence, rebellion, disorder, they care little what the game they play so that they hold the trumps, and win the deal—which be assured they never will—as long as England remains true to herself.

“ If England to herself be only true,”

Trifling as the facts, they were not the less convincing that Jacob, thoroughly in his own heart appreciated the comfortable position as much as he envied those among whom he had dropped, as were it, from the clouds; he rubbed his hands, and then his knees before the blazing fire—he then thrust them deep into the recesses of his capacious pockets—then ventured in his exhilaration,

actually to pat the head of the hitherto purring cat. These animals are, however, possessed of somewhat more instinct and sagacity than men generally give them credit for, and puss ceased purring to spit at the touch of a stranger's hand.

"Get out, beast," said Jacob, "like your betters, you spurn the touch of those who live not in your luxury.

This trifling incident turned the whole current of the delegate's thought; he was already half beginning to dream, that all men were not slaves, all places not harbingers of serf-hood—while the smell of the rashers preparing for his morning's consumption—had, as such things will to a hungry man—opened the only pores of kindness in his narrow heart, and disaffected mind. But now all was wrong again.

"Here, young woman, young woman," he cried, "am I never to have any breakfast—this a public-house of entertainment, and a hungry man to be kept an hour for his breakfast, my business is pressing and important,

I tell you, and I must be far away from hence ere night fall—so give me to eat, I pray, and let me be gadding.”

“Patience sir, patience sir,” said the active Nancy, “it’s early yet, bacon is not fried in a minute.”

“Well, make haste, lassie, make haste, for I cannot linger here all day.”

Now, it is true, that the Passmore arms, properly speaking, was a house of public entertainment, that is to say, the worthy landlord had a license to sell the beer he brewed, and was glad that his neighbours should drink it at a reasonable price, and pronounce it excellent; this beer, however, was, generally speaking drank in the presence of the man who brewed it; and those who came there to enjoy a mug, generally remained to chat with the host, who, by all was respected; few travellers ever remained for the night, probably not one in three years, there was no private sitting-room. And those who were admitted, as was Mr. Jacob



Clarke, entered the door, more, that the inmates of the house wished to do their duty, kindly, then with any desire to gain much from their customers.

Nancy had, therefore, been always treated with respect by all who came to her uncle's house, as an equal, indeed, generally speaking, as a superior, for her relation was known to be a man of some substance, and at all events, as I said before, he was generally respected. Moreover, she was a bold and truthful woman, and she clearly saw through the thin veil which covered Mr. Jacob's presumption.

On being thus impatiently addressed a second time, her usual quick temper rather gave way. And she replied somewhat hastily.

"I'll tell you what it is, man, if you aint pleased to bide your time, you must needs go without your breakfast; I have served your betters many a day, and had a kind and gentle word for my pains. Many a day young Master Frederick and his sister come down here and

take a lunch in our parlour ; they ask for this and that, as if we were doing them a favour to allow them to sit down for an hour, and drink our ale, for which they would gladly pay double if uncle would let them—while the like of you pops in after hours at night, gives us a world of trouble, and then orders one about as if one was dirt under your feet. I'll tell you what it is sir, you may well call us slaves, as I heard you last night, but we are not the slaves of such as you—so be patient, I tell you, or I'll feed the pigs first, and serve you afterwards.

Mr. Jacob was crest fallen, he had found his match in the quiet rural maiden he had thought to awe, he forgot the truthful saying, that still water often runs deep, and contains bottomless holes, in which a blind man, or one who runs too fast, may chance to fall ; and his ire rose in proportion as his hunger and impatience increased, for Nancy was not to be

threatened or hurried in the propriety of her movements.

“ You may have served your betters, young lady,” replied he, with bitter sarcasm, “ but not mine ; my maxim is, that all men are equal in the sight of God—some may be richer, some poorer—and that’s the rock we split on, ’tis the rich who call themselves our betters, because wealth gives them better power to crush and distress us ; but I tell you, young woman, the day is not far distant when some of these millionaires shall disgorge and—then when men have their proper rights, and share alike, as it was by nature intended—there will be none better, none worse—but I see, young woman, you smile, you do not understand these matters, and it is a loss of time to explain them.”

“ No, indeed, I do not,” said Nancy, placing a smoking dish before the insensate equaliser.

“ No, indeed, I do not ; neither do I wish it, I am no young lady, either ; nor do I desire to

be one. I am contented with the lot in which I was born, and I covet not the wealth of others. My station suits me well, and I could never aspire to another, for I have neither education or means, but I have sense enough to know what such as you cannot teach me—that were I to follow the advice as you give, we should soon be in the poor-house, or a gaol—and fitting places too; so eat your breakfast, and never mind our concerns.”

This was a poser, to use a vulgar expression, but such men as Jacob Clarke are not easily put down by words, and taking little apparent notice, while with hearty good will, he discussed his wholesome and comfortable breakfast, he proceeded, though in a somewhat more subdued tone, to question his honest companion, as to the residents of the neighbourhood.

“I see then, we disagree, be it so; I am not here to explain my sentiments, but to rest and refresh myself. If I err not, however, I

have passed through this village before, though many years have since elapsed. If my memory fails me not, I recollect also that at that time there lived here, or hereabouts, a farmer named Winter. One Mathew Winter: Does he reside here now ;”

“ No.”

“ Whither is he gone then, can you tell me ?”

“ Yes ; where you and I must go sooner or later ; to his last home.”

“ Oh,” said Jacob. “ And has he left no friends, no relations ?”

“ Yes, a son.”

“ And has that son a wife ?”

“ No.”

“ You are brief in your replies, young woman ; but never mind. All I require is a little information.”

“ That is evident, but I am not accustomed to give it of my friends and neighbours, without I know the object for which it is asked,

particularly when questioned by a stranger, and that stranger, one whose sentiments are strange to rustic ears like ours."

"It is my duty to make known my sentiments to all; they are such as ought to take root in the breast of every man and woman who would not desire to return to times of feudalism. Answer me not any question which may appear unpleasant, or inconsistent. All I desire is, to gain a knowledge of a family with whom mine had once some connection, nothing more."

"Well, I thought as much, for they are somewhat upstarts, if there really be any such here, or hereabouts; and after all, not so much, young farmer Winter, himself, for he is no hard master, though he wishes to be what he can't, and never will, be a gentleman, like those true ones at the hall. But his two sisters, who have been to a boarding-school, and all that, thinks themselves mighty fine ladies—they comes down flaunting into the village some-

times—probably you may see them this morning if you are not gone. No, bye-the-bye, they are in London just now, with an aunt, I think, and much good it may do them—with their airs and graces.”

“ Ah ! he has two sisters, has he, this farmer Winter. Young, aye, younger than himself.”

“ Yes, I told you he had two sisters, and they are younger than himself, if you must know ; but what of that.”

“ O, nothing, nothing whatever—I was merely endeavouring to recall to my mind some facts of the family. And they are well to do in the world, I conclude, have a fair slice in the ill divided cake of England’s taxed lands. I suppose the farmer keeps his hunters, takes his port and sherry, and his lady, sisters, have a few thousands each, as marriage portions.”

“ I know nought about their thousands,” said Mary, “ but it is said they are well to do, and have land of their own—and this they

take good care that all the world shall know, so there is little harm in telling you, I fancy."

It was sufficiently evident that with all her caution, together with the dislike the girl had already taken to her guest, that she was no match for him in cunning and impudence, which had he been accused of it, Mr. Jacob would have been highly indignant, should be misread for frankness; he had eaten a good breakfast, gained all or more than he wished to know, and now having asked for the account of his expenditure, which he did in somewhat more civil terms than he was wont to demand all he required, and at which, small as it was, he grumbled; he prepared to go his way, and force on others as he had done on Mr. Smythe, his unwelcome presence. Before we say a word more in reference to these, his sentiments, of equality, I fancy I do not err when I add, that on the very commencement of the formation of what were termed chartist clubs, a few



of the most cunning, most hardened, and insolent of the lowest democrats and republicans, men who had nothing to lose ; neither character, station, or means ; but every thing to gain by the most trifling events, were sent forth from town to town, and village to village—some through the rural districts, and others to the mercantile towns, to sow the seeds of disorder and discontent, that their leaders might reap their harvest of confusion. Little cared they whither they went, or with whom they associated ; self was their leader, they his envoys. In fact, they went forth as paid agents to do evil, and instil into weak or immoral minds all that is worst, in human nature. On precisely reverse grounds that we are led to hope, our ministers and missionaries of God's word go forth to instil and enlighten those in darkness, and bring them to a knowledge of the truth—for, instead of teaching patience, submission, and fair representation of their real situation, they fostered discontent among those hitherto

happy. I am far, however, from being so ungenerous, or so opinionated, as to contend that there are not many men who glory in the name of chartist—and who as firmly believe in the truth of the expediency of the measures that they maintain are most for the benefit of mankind, and their country, as they are individually loyal to the crown. Neither, am I so bigotted to party, or so bound to the spirit of pure liberalism which I desire to advocate, as to deny that in the charter issued by these leaders, there are not some just and well founded causes of complaint; I cannot for a moment admit, as some men would, that the voice of any man in a free country, should be raised to offer an opinion, however ill advised that opinion should be, without its being fairly listened to, and if needs be, legislated on. It is not, therefore, against individual chartists that I would raise my voice, or use my pen, but against the miseries which their mistaken views were nearly causing, in fact did cause, in

their madness. Had this cause been justified as a cause, had not its very effects been solely those of evil, instead of good, instead of their ranks having been swelled—and that only in moderation—by the very scum of the earth—the very vilest and most immoral of men—the indolent, the vicious, the idle and uneducated. Many from many different motives; but all centered in self—we should have found that the first men of the land—the most upright patriots—if one exist on earth—the most able men—men of rank, affluence, talent, character, and power, would have joined their ranks, and held their standard. But evil can never long exist, never will in a country like this. And the misplaced charter blasted in a moment, the embers now only flicker, and will soon be for ever extinguished; not so, I fear, the evil effects engendered from the wild notions and unsound opinions engendered by its unprincipled delegates.

But I wander from my friend Jacob, who

having given due attention to the comforts of his wearied man, and obtained all the information he considered necessary, at the Passmore Arms, is about to proceed on his wanderings. The pack, from the burden of which his shoulders had been relieved on the previous evening, is now once more replaced by the aid of the obliging, but still indignant Nancy.

A light weight, forsooth, to that he must carry on his conscience as he walks forth into the mist. His foot, however, is scarcely across the threshold ere he meets with honest John Symthe.

“Good morrow, Mr. Jacob ; good morrow,” the good man appeared desirous to give him the title of sir, which he would in courtesy have given to a far less presentable person, had he found him humble. But the opinions he had expressed by no means tallied with such a man as the landlord of the Passmore Arms—so he merely added.

“I trust you have found all comfortable and reasonable, and, I may add, peaceful here and hereabouts—take my advice, tell the good people whither you are going, that we want none of your new fangled ideas in this neighbourhood—none of your votes by ballot, as you term it—none of your annual Parliaments—and none of your universal suffrages. The whole of our parish now labours, and are paid for that labour, and we want no novelties—without it be a universal rate, or a rate in aid, and then we must pay our share, for it is the duty of all men to help one another, and those who are prosperous are best able to assist them who are not. Give us notice, however, ere you come here again, and you shall have a better supper, and an honest welcome if you think as we do. A better bed I cannot give you ; so, good morning, and God be with you.”

“And with you also, and with all,” said

Jacob. "Yet, friend, you will live to see changes here as elsewhere—and great changes, such as you scarcely dream of."

"May be—may be," replied Smythe, "let them come, if it be God's will, so that they only affect the place, and not the hearts of the people."

And with this they parted.

END OF VOL. I.







